

Some of Havant's Social History

Robert West and John Pile

The Havant Union Workhouse

The Rookery and Somerstown
(Two of Havant's former slum areas)

The Havant Bonfire Boys

The Vestry and Local Board of Health

Mains Drainage Comes – at Last – to Havant
Charles Lewis – Surveyor and Auctioneer in
Nineteenth Century Havant

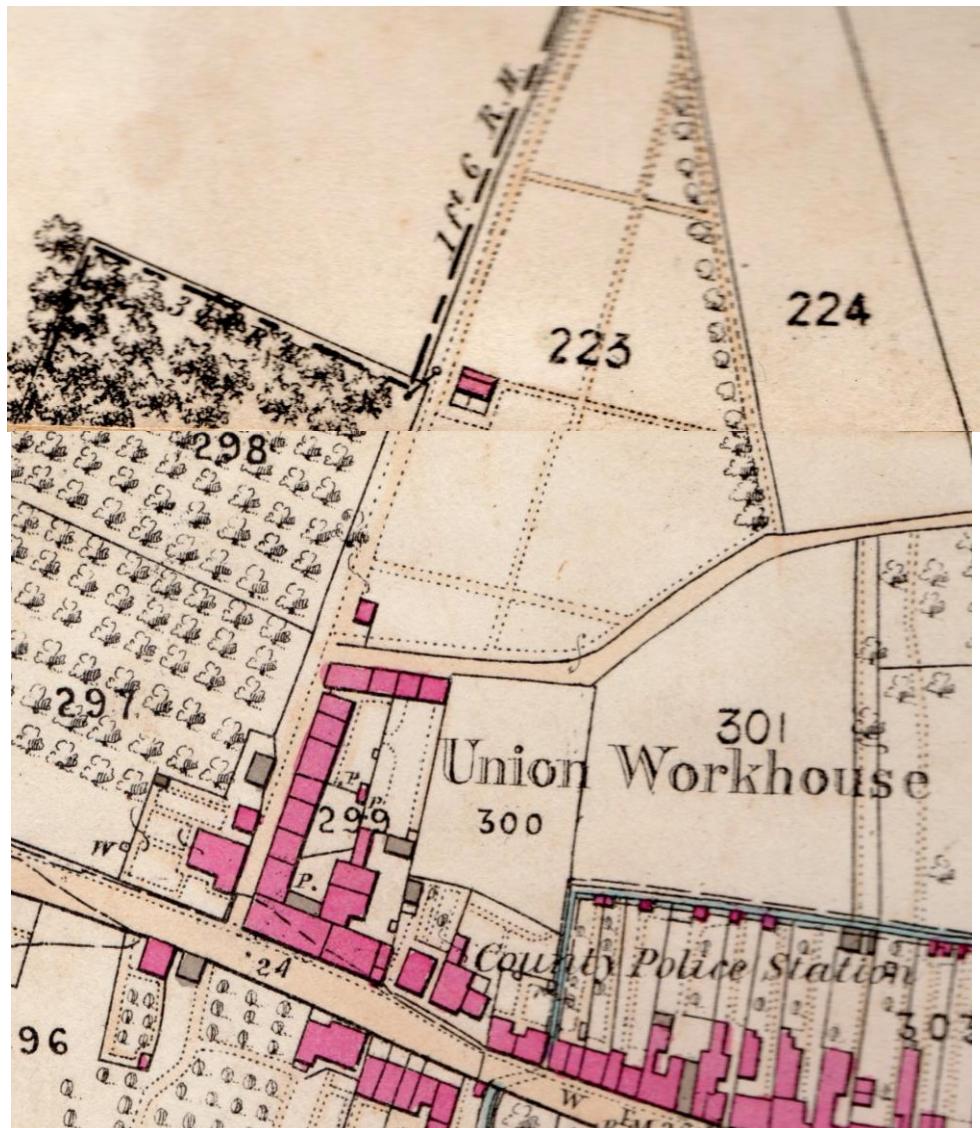


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This extract from the Ordnance Survey Map of about 1875 shows the extent of the workhouse buildings which covered plot 299 at the corner of Union Road and West Street. Plot 223 also was part of the grounds which were used as an allotment to grow their own vegetables. The building at the top appears to be a pigsty. The next building below is believed to be the mortuary.

The Havant Union Workhouse

Robert West



The Havant Union Workhouse on the corner of West Street and Union Road circa 1920

The Workhouse before 1835.

We know very little about the early history of the Havant Workhouse. It was certainly in existence by 1776, when a national survey of overseers' statistics estimated it to have a capacity of 50, but it is unlikely to be significantly older than this. Although the Poor Law itself had been in force since 1601, parish workhouses – or, as they were sometimes called, poorhouses – did not become widely established until the middle of the 18th century.

However an Act of 1564 empowered parish officers to provide places to house the 'roaming beggar' so it is not impossible that there was a poorhouse in Havant from this date.

There was, strictly speaking, a distinction between a workhouse and a poorhouse. The former was a quasi-penal institution in which the able-bodied unemployed would be set to work, whilst the latter was a refuge of last resort for those incapable of working: infants, lunatics, the sick, disabled or elderly. The distinction was, however, almost invariably blurred, and was certainly so at Havant. They must both also be distinguished from almshouses, which were privately endowed charitable

institutions, usually for elderly paupers. It is possible that, until at least the middle of the 19th century, there was an almshouse situated to the west of the workhouse in a field, known locally known as Almshouse Field, in the area where the Roman Catholic church is located. If it was here it would have been in the Bedhampton parish.

The earliest surviving account of the Havant Workhouse is to be found in the Parochial Report for the parish in the *Hampshire Repository* of 1801 (Vol. II p. 159):

The poor house is far from being an uncomfortable place, though I fear it is not kept under a judicious system, for the paupers are dissatisfied with their treatment and claim redress; there are about fifty paupers now residing in it, including aged people, women and children. There was a few years ago a manufactory of sacks carried on by such as were able to work, and it lessened the annual assessments; but of late it has been discontinued, to the detriment of the parish and encouragement of idleness; for at present but little work is done by any, save the children, who are too young to evade the orders of the governor; the old men hang over the fire day by day, and study to avoid the most trifling labour. It has been the practice to admit women who have left their husbands, to expiate the crime of infidelity and debauchery, at a time when they were labouring under their diseases.

There are, however, some women employed in knitting and making up linen; the children sweep the street before the house and are initiated in a course of idleness which may attend them throughout life.

A few years later Walter Butler in his *Hundred of Bosmere* of 1817 (p. 50-51) described it as a large old building housing eight men, 12 women, 12 boys and 12 girls:

The boys and girls pick oakum, when any employment of this kind can be had; at other times go to farmer's work. The oldest boy, 14 years old, generally at service before that age: the oldest girl, 17 years old, but being a cripple, still remains in the house.

A person in the house employed to teach to the boys and girls to read, the usual number of hours every day.

The male and female inmates were segregated and a Master and Mistress were employed at a salary of £30 per annum with room and provisions and fire and candles. He also furnishes us with details of the inmates' extremely meagre diet: breakfast and supper were invariably bread, cheese and beer, whilst dinner was meat six days a week alternately hot and cold, except on Thursdays when it was yet more bread and cheese.

It is possible that shortly after this the workhouse was substantially expanded, or even that a completely new one was erected. Admittedly the only evidence for this comes from White's *Directory and History of Hampshire* for 1878 which simply states that a workhouse for the parish was built in 1819, but it is more than likely that some major work was done at this time. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 there was a huge increase in the number of unemployed and destitute all over the country, not least in south-east Hampshire where the economy relied heavily on the Royal Navy at Portsmouth. So the old workhouse, with its capacity of just 50 would surely have been inadequate.

But 16 years later it was expanded again, at a cost of £900, when it became the workhouse for the newly-created Havant Union.

The Workhouse, 1835 to 1856

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 was the most fundamental reform of poor relief until the mid-20th century. The original Poor Law Act had, of course, undergone many amendments since 1601 but these were minor and piecemeal. By the second quarter of the 19th century, with a rapidly expanding population and increasing urbanisation and industrialisation, it was clear that a radical overhaul was needed.

The 1834 Act introduced two main innovations. Firstly, the amalgamation of parishes into unions for the purposes of poor relief, with all such matters now being taken out of the hands of the local Vestries. Thus the Havant Union (one of the 23 into which Hampshire was divided) comprised the six parishes of Havant itself, Warblington (which included Emsworth) North Hayling, South Hayling, Bedhampton and Farlington. There was, moreover, to be just one Workhouse Union, so the Havant Parish Workhouse became the Havant Union Workhouse and the other parish workhouses were closed down. This workhouse was to be run by a new body, the Board of Guardians, elected annually by ratepayers and answerable to a Poor Law Commission (later the Poor Law Board and later still the Local Government Board) in London, the first time that local government had ever been subjected to centralised supervision. The Havant Union, which came into being on 27 May 1835, had 14 Guardians; three from Havant, three from Warblington, one each from the other four parishes, and four ex-officio members, who were usually magistrates or Justices of the Peace. Elections, however, at least up to the 1860s, seem to have been rare with most candidates standing unopposed.

The second innovation was the abolition of all Outdoor Relief (i.e. payment in money or in kind) to the able-bodied poor. In particular there was to be an end to the so-

called Speenhamland system. This had been instituted by the magistrates of Speenhamland in Berkshire in 1795 in response to the very high price of bread and had been widely adopted in the agricultural parishes of south and east England, where wages were especially low. It involved topping up the wages of labourers out of the Poor Rate, with the amount dependent upon the price of bread and the size of the labourer's family, and its implementation had seen the cost of poor relief rise steadily. Expenditure upon this in Havant in 1785 had been about £425, but by 1813 it was £1,525 and must have increased substantially once more in the years of depression after 1815.

By the early 1830s it was universally agreed (at least by those in authority) that Speenhamland was an unmitigated evil which distorted the labour market, demoralised the labouring classes and placed an intolerable burden upon ratepayers. It had to go. Henceforth this class of pauper must only be relieved indoors, that is within the workhouse, and in order to ensure that as few people as possible would seek refuge there the new union workhouses were to be run upon the principles of Less Eligibility. In other words they were to be made less attractive than all but the most wretched conditions beyond their doors. But of course simply in terms of material living conditions this was impossible: in the workhouse you were at very least fed, clothed and kept warm and dry. So it had to be made unappealing in other ways, specifically through discipline, depersonalisation and regimentation. Every inmate was obliged to wear a workhouse uniform, few personal possessions were allowed, privacy of any kind was virtually non-existent and, if you were deemed fit to work, you had to form some repetitive manual task all day every day except Sunday. It was also a virtual prison for you could not come and go as you pleased.

But although in one respect the 1834 Act was a radical comprehensive piece of legislation, in another it was utterly deficient. The Royal Commission set up in 1832 to examine the workings of the old Poor Law, and whose recommendations the new Act largely adopted, had been obsessed with just one issue – Speenhamland; so although it had a great deal to say about able-bodied pauperism and the perceived idleness and moral depravity of much of the labouring population, it had virtually nothing to say about other types of pauperism, and the one recommendation that they did make in this respect – that there should be separate institutions for the able-bodied, the sick, the elderly and children – was ignored. Every union workhouse therefore became what was known as a General Mixed Workhouse in which all categories of pauper were herded together under the punitive *less eligibility* regime. To be sure there was rigid segregation within the workhouse with no less than seven categories of pauper: able-bodied males, able-bodied females, infirm males, infirm females, boys aged seven to 15, girls aged seven to 15 and infants, but this

classification was, to say the least, unsatisfactory. Families were split up and nursing mothers separated from their babies whilst the old, the sick, the disabled and the insane or mentally retarded were lumped together in the infirm wards.

Not surprisingly the new poor law was by no means universally welcomed. Indeed it was vigorously opposed on the one hand by Radicals, who saw it as an attempt to punish and stigmatise the poor, and on the other hand by Tories who feared that elected Boards of Guardians and state supervision would undermine the traditional powers and privileges of the landed gentry. Individual parish vestries could also feel aggrieved at their loss of powers, and this was certainly the case at Bedhampton where the minutes of the Vestry meetings in the years after 1835 reveal a sustained and vigorous hostility to the new union.

Thus the Havant Union Workhouse was a rather different institution to the parish workhouse it replaced. We get but few glimpses of the workings of the new regime from press reports, but they can be revealing. In December 1839 for example, Thomas Downton was committed to Gosport Bridewell for three months for absconding, whilst in March 1842 Elizabeth Brooks was given 14 days with hard labour for *refusing to perform work allotted to her in the workhouse*. The penal nature of the institution is also attested to by the appointment in July 1846 of an ex-prison warder from Parkhurst, Alfred Gunner, as the new master. He was, according to the *Hampshire Telegraph*:

The fourth appointment to a situation of this kind from Parkhurst Prison in the last nine months.

Finally, the strict moral regime can be illustrated by the press advertisement placed in August 1844 for a new schoolmistress who was required:

Not only to attend to the moral and religious training of the children, but to teach them industrious habits in order to them afterwards being useful domestic servants.

Havant was unusual, however, in providing any sort of education. A schoolmaster earning £25 per annum and a schoolmistress earning £20 per annum were employed up to the mid-1850s, although after this time the children were sent to local elementary schools. In 1851 the schoolmaster was Henry Holker, the brother of the mistress Mrs Fry, whilst the schoolmistress was a local 19-year-old girl named Amy Ide.

The censuses of 1841 and 1851 give us the only real information that we have about the inmates of the workhouse in this period. The 1841 census records 76 inmates, 32 male and 34 female, with just six aged seven or under and 11 aged 60 or over. At

least three-quarters, therefore, would be deemed of working age, and the great majority of them, women as well as men, were classified as agricultural labourers. In one respect, of course, this is not surprising, but given that the census was conducted in early June, when employment on the land should have been plentiful, it might seem odd that so many of them were in the workhouse. 1841 however was a year of great hardship, and distress was widespread, in rural areas as well as industrial.

The census of 1851 , taken at the end of March, records 92 inmates, 44 male and 48 female, with 13 aged seven or under and 16 aged 60 or over. About two-thirds, therefore, were of working age, and again agricultural labourers comprised by far the largest category of employment. Not surprisingly the great majority were born either within the boundaries of the Havant Union or not far beyond them, testifying to the fact that mobility, geographical as much as social, was very limited for the rural poor.

White's Directory (1859) (The first edition) records the following details of the union workhouse:

The Union Workhouse is at Havant, and was built for that parish in 1819, and enlarged after the formation of the union, so that it has now room for about 200 inmates, though it has seldom more than 150, and had only 92 in 1851, when the census was taken. The expenditure of the union in 1858 was about . £5,500, including salaries, &c, and upwards of £750 paid to county rates. Three Guardians are elected for each of the parishes of Havant and Warblington, and one for each of the other four parishes. They and four ex-officio guardians meet every alternate Tuesday; and John Deverell, Esq., is the chairman. Charles Beare Longcroft, Esq., is the union clerk and superintendent registrar, and Mr. James and Mrs. Ann Weeks are master and matron of the Workhouse. Messrs. J. W. R. Baxter, Wm. Bannister, and Wm. Stedman, are the surgeons; Mr. Fdk. Cavell is the relieving officer and registrar of births and deaths; and Messrs. C. J. Longcroft and Charles Locke are registrars of marriages.

Sometime during this period just over 2½ acres of land to the north of the workhouse (where the fire station in Parkway is now located) was acquired as the workhouse garden. This must have been after 1842, for on the Tithe Map of that date this land is shown as pasture belonging to John Holland, but before 1856, for the surviving minutes of the Board of Guardians show no record of its purchase. It was used to grow vegetables, especially potatoes which were a large constituent of the inmates' diet. The Ordnance Survey map appears to show the sties in which the workhouse pigs were kept.

The Crisis of 1838/9

The new poor law had been introduced under the most favourable circumstances, for the years 1835 to 1837 all saw fine summers with abundant harvests. But the summer of 1838 was cool and wet, the harvest failed, and in the autumn the price of bread began to rise steeply. By the onset of winter it was as high as it had been for many a year and distress was widespread.

It was under these circumstances that, with even the newly-enlarged workhouse full, the Guardians of the Havant Union took the momentous decision in December 1838 to re-introduce the old Speenhamland Allowances. They were, perhaps, the only union in the country to do so, and their decision made not only the national press but also provincial newspapers as far afield as Manchester and Leeds. It provided valuable ammunition for the many opponents of the new poor law, but needless to say it also incurred the wrath of the Poor Law Commission and on 5 December their secretary, Edwin Chadwick, wrote to the Havant Guardians demanding to know why the allowances had been re-introduced. Fortunately both his letter and the Guardians' reply (from their clerk CB Longcroft) were printed in the *Hampshire Telegraph* of 17 December.

Chadwick's letter basically rehearsed all the old, familiar arguments against allowances, even asserting that they tended to:

Destroy the natural connection between master and servant and threaten the interruption of the social order.

Longcroft's reply, in essence, was that decisions like this were best taken locally by Guardians using their own judgement and not merely acting as *the blind and passive instrument of a superior power*.

There can be no doubt that the man behind this courageous defiance of the Poor Law Commission was the Board of Guardians' chairman John Barton. As early as July he had written a letter to the *Morning Chronicle* expressing the fear that the current harvest would be catastrophic and warning that *parts of the new poor law press with great and needless severity on the industrious and deserving poor*, whilst in November he had written to another national newspaper, *The Standard*, justifying the payment of allowances under certain circumstances.

But Barton was not just some local gentleman with a fondness for writing to the newspapers; he was an intellectual figure of some standing who wrote numerous pamphlets and articles upon a wide variety of topics including botany and philosophy, but perhaps his greatest area of expertise was economics. He had access to, and knew how to handle, economic statistics, and so was able to back up his

arguments with facts and figures. He demonstrated, for example, that given the level of agricultural wages and the exorbitant price of bread it was quite impossible for a farm labourer in the Havant Union with a wife and more than two children not to starve without some form of relief. He must have been one of the very few Guardians in the land with the intellectual confidence and ability to stand up to the likes of the formidable Edwin Chadwick. It must be said, however, that he was neither a Radical nor a Tory but a laissez-faire Liberal who by and large supported the new poor law. But he was also a pragmatist.

Let us not trifl[e] away the lives of the poor, he wrote in one of his letters, *upon mere surmising, or theoretical notions of political economy.*

Just how long the payment of allowances continued is not certain. What is certain, however, is that the Poor Rate was increased substantially to finance them, for by January 1839, the *Hampshire Advertiser* was reporting that some 20 ratepayers from the Havant Union had been brought before the local magistrates for non-payment of rates, their defence being that they were themselves poor.

Some light is shed upon the way the workhouse itself was being run at this time by another letter to the *Hampshire Telegraph* of 4 March 1839. It was written by Francis Ommanney, vice-chair of the Strand Union in London and presumably related to Sir John Ommanney the naval commander and some time resident of Warblington House. It offered a robust defence of the Havant Guardians from accusations that the workhouse diet was *very meagre* and that a mere 1s. 4d. (7p) per week was being spent upon each inmate. Having inspected the workhouse himself one Sunday and seen the paupers dine upon a *wholesome* meal of meat, potatoes and bread, Ommanney was satisfied that it was *most creditable* in matters of cleanliness and conduct, and asserted that the real expenditure was 2s. 4½d. (12p) per-week per-inmate. His visit could scarcely have been any later than the end of February when the workhouse must have been at, or close to full capacity, but exactly how impartial his testimony is it is impossible to tell, for he was a fervent supporter of the new poor law.

One other interesting sidelight arises from this affair. In his letter to the Havant Guardians Chadwick had suggested that, if the workhouse really was full the destitute should at least earn their allowances by undertaking some sort of public works. Now the winter of 1838/9 was exceptionally wet and the Lavant stream flooded Havant. In January 1839 an emergency meeting of the local Vestry was held to discuss flood prevention measures, and although we do not know exactly what was decided we do know that a special one-off rate was levied to pay for them. One distinct possibility, however, is the digging of the Town Ditch, that branch of the

Lavant which runs in a clearly artificial channel due west from Boys Brigade Gardens before turning at right angles to flow beneath West Street at what used to be Ruttle Bridge. Map evidence shows that it was created between 1833 and 1842 (previously this branch of the Lavant simply meandered towards Ruttle Bridge in a south-westerly direction) and so the most likely time for it to be dug has to be early in 1839 by labourers who would have otherwise been in the workhouse had it not been full.

The Elisa Kill Affair

Readers of *The Times* for the 12 December 1850, or of the *Hampshire Telegraph* a few days later when the same report appeared word for word, would have been confronted with the following shocking story:

Attempt To Burn A Workhouse

One of the inmates of the Havant workhouse, in the county of Hants, has recently made an attempt to burn the union workhouse. This diabolical outrage, if successful, would in all probability have caused the death of several persons. The house, at the time of the attempted arson, contained, including the officials, upwards of 100 souls. The person who has been arrested for the offence is a girl named Elisa Kill, aged 17 years. She had been sent into the workhouse by her mother on account of incorrigible bad conduct, much against her inclination, and had been heard to utter threats in consequence she was locked in with the young girls, 25 in number, all junior to herself, from three years of age upwards. On the night of the 24th ult. some of the children observed that the room was lighted up and full of smoke, upon which an alarm was given; when the master entered the apartment he found one of the beds burning. The girl was speedily arrested. The escape of the children may be looked upon as little short of miraculous, as they were locked in, and, the house being very old, and having much timber in its composition, would have burnt like tinder. The chance – nay, the certainty is that had the house caught fire, all the children and many of the old and infirm must have been destroyed. A rigid inquiry being set in foot, it was found by the evidence of two of the children, one 12 and the other 13 years of age, that Elisa Kill was seen going from her own bed, setting fire with a lucifer-match to the bed of her half-brother, and afterwards retiring to her own. The girl had contrived to make a small heap of chips and shavings under the bed of her intended victim. On being searched, a one word brooch belonging to the schoolmistress was found upon her. She has been committed to Winchester gaol to take her trial for the attempt to set fire to the workhouse, and for petty larceny.

The Times, 12 December 1850

When the case came to court, however, at the Winchester Assizes early in March 1851 it emerged that the fire had not been nearly as serious as the press report had insinuated. The fire had barely begun to smoulder before being rapidly extinguished and no one's life had been in the remotest danger. Moreover, although Elisa had certainly started the fire, the jury concluded that it had been nothing more than a malicious prank and there had been no intention of burning the workhouse down. Consequently they found her not guilty. Interestingly the charge of petty larceny seems to have been dropped.

This reflects well upon the jury, who were obviously unwilling to convict a young girl on a charge that would have led to severe punishment. (At the same Assizes a man called Grimes was convicted of attempting to burn down Parkhurst Prison and was sentenced to transportation for 15 years.) The same cannot be said, however, for the Havant Guardians, for there is little doubt that they deliberately exaggerated the seriousness of the incident in order to rid themselves of an obviously troublesome inmate. Also one of them must have fed the press that sensationalist, one-sided story which condemned her even before a trial had taken place.

But who was Elisa Kill? The 1851 census, conducted shortly after the trial, shows just five people of that name, but none 17 years of age or even close to it, and none living within the Havant Union area. There is, however, a 12-year-old (the daughter of a labourer) residing at Portsea. Moreover on the 1841 census this family was at Wymering, only just outside the Havant Union boundary. So this is the most plausible candidate for our Elisa Kill, and if she really was 12-years-old it would not only make the Guardians' conduct even more questionable but it would also clear up a couple of otherwise puzzling facts about the case. Firstly it would explain why she was in the young girls' dormitory, for the idea that, as an adult, she would be put there as a punishment is barely credible. There were well-established rules, laid down by the Poor Law Commission, for dealing with disobedient inmates, but they did not include removing adults to children's wards. Secondly whilst it is possible that a 12-year-old could be sent to the workhouse by their parents because of *her incorrigible bad conduct* it is hard to believe that a 17-year-old could be dealt with in such a fashion.

Unfortunately if this 12-year-old girl really was the acquitted defendant she did not live long to enjoy her freedom for she died on 31 March, the very day after the 1851 census was conducted. perhaps the time she had spent on remand in Winchester gaol from the end of November to the beginning of March had taken its toll.

The Workhouse from 1856 to 1900

Sources: Minutes and Newspapers

The minutes of the meetings of the Havant Union Board of Guardians survive from June 1856 onwards. These meetings were held in the board room at the workhouse, and, until April 1857 took place weekly on Thursday afternoons. Thereafter they were held every fortnight.

The minutes were taken by the clerk, who also dealt with the Union's correspondence, legal affairs and accounts. It was a position which carried a significant salary (in 1880 it was £40 per annum) and throughout almost the entire 95 years of the Union's existence it was occupied by just three men, successive generations of the Longcroft family: Charles Beare until his death in 1859, then his son Charles John until his death in 1877, and finally Edward Roy until his retirement in 1928. They were all prominent Havant solicitors.

In one respect the minutes are of great value. They give us a good picture of administrative affairs and expenditure, but tell us very little about the day to day running of the workhouse and of course almost nothing about the lives and experiences of the inmates. Also only rarely do they hint at dissensions amongst the Guardians themselves. This particular deficiency, at least, is remedied after the press are finally allowed to report their meetings in November 1891. This was a long time after some other local Unions had taken this step, e.g. Portsea and Alverstoke, and four years later than the Havant Urban Sanitary Authority. On the other hand the Fareham Union did not open its doors to reporters until 1893.

Press coverage of the workhouse prior to this was patchy in the extreme, confined mainly to court cases involving inmates. Once the press were allowed to report on meetings however we get a flavour, sometimes more than a flavour, of arguments amongst board members. And in the 1890s there were plenty of them. In October 1892 for example the headline 'Charges of Favouritism' a 'Scene' accompanied a report in the *Hampshire Telegraph* of an animated debate about workhouse tenders (see below), whilst in February 1893 it was 'Lively Proceedings' when an argument between the chairman, Francis Foster, and one of the Warblington Guardians, Joshua Mosdell, was recounted by the same publication in some detail. Mr Mosdell wanted to know why no architect other than AC Lewis had been considered to draw up plans for the new mortuary, to which Mr Foster replied that: *If the board was going to stick at a trifle like that the sooner they obtained a new chairman and a new set of officers the better*, and accused Mr Mosdell of acting from *individual motives*.

The Guardians must have been unhappy that so much of their hitherto private squabbling was now being made public and matters came to a head in May 1895 over the scandal surrounding the Union's Rate Collector, Arthur Wood, who had recently disappeared with just over £1,000 of the Union's funds. Reports of the meeting of 16 May, at which the matter was discussed at some length, were carried by all the local newspapers; the *Hampshire Telegraph*, *Portsmouth News* and *Hampshire Post*. But these last two had apparently revealed details that the Guardians had asked them to withhold, and consequently at their next Board meeting a motion that reporters from these newspapers be *excluded from meetings until further notice* was carried unanimously. The ban lasted almost a year and the *Hampshire Telegraph* must have stayed away in sympathy too, for no reports of Guardians' meetings were carried by them either during that period. Thereafter, however, apart from a rather fractious debate in May and June 1896 about vaccinations there were far fewer arguments or scandals for the press to seize upon. Indeed as the decade progressed coverage became, by and large, less comprehensive and meetings at which only routine matters were discussed were ignored altogether. Nevertheless newspapers from the late 1890s do still yield information that is not to be gleaned from the minutes.

Buildings

There is disappointingly little information about what the workhouse actually looked like, especially inside. No plans, drawings or written descriptions survive and the few photographs we have, which were taken in the early 20th century, show only the main facade along West Street. This has a rather homely, cottage-like appearance that is probably somewhat misleading.

The only clues to its plan are to be found in a succession of large-scale maps, commencing with the 1842 Tithe Map and continuing with the various editions of the Ordnance Survey 25-inch series. They reveal that it began as a rough F-shape with the main axis running along West Street and two shorter northwards projections. There were subsequent extensions to these two projections and another short extension running east-west along what is now Parkway.

The complex would have comprised the dormitories for various categories of inmate plus an infirmary, kitchen, bakehouse, dining hall, laundry, workshop, board room, master's office and accommodation for the master and matron and other residential staff. The only outbuildings were the short-lived isolation unit (see below) and the mortuary.

It is believed that the mortuary is the building shown on the western edge of the

garden in the map on page 2, which was replaced in similar location in 1895. There is quite a sizeable structure also on the western side of the garden on the 1866 25 inch map – but before the garden land was acquired the mortuary must have been within the workhouse itself. Paupers were buried in unmarked graves. Some larger workhouses had their own graveyards but at Havant bodies would have been interred in the Union's various public cemeteries. The new mortuary, which included a dissection room for autopsies, was erected at a cost of £158. The old one seems to have been less than adequate for in 1888, at an inquest on one of the inmates it was reported that:

The offensive smell at the workhouse mortuary elicited expressions from the jury that it should be properly ventilated.

But the new one, however well it may have been designed, was still without a mains water supply, a state of affairs that was to continue for many years. Before this time water would have been obtained from wells the locations of which are indicated by the three letter 'Ps' for pump on the map.

Like the rest of Havant mains water came to the workhouse in 1871, but this seems to have been one of the few substantial improvements for most of the 19th century. Apart from various special projects like new casual wards, mortuary and isolation unit very little seems to have been done, and in 1885 it was even reported that parts of what were termed the *old building* were structurally unsound. It was not until about 1894 that a significant programme of renovation and extension took place, invariably in response to various recommendations made by the Local Government Board Inspector, Baldwyn Fleming, in his annual reports. This was completed by 1901, when a new infirmary and lying-in wards were constructed and improvements made to the laundry.

Tenders

Although they kept pigs and had a large kitchen garden the workhouse still needed to buy in significant quantities of food and other provisions, principally beef, mutton, tea, sugar, milk, beer, oatmeal, flour (or bread when there was no resident baker), butter, cheese, soap, coal and candles. Contracts to supply these provisions, which lasted for six months, were certainly worth obtaining for there were rarely fewer than 60 inmates and sometimes in excess of 100 and annual expenditure on basic items alone was in the region of £1,500 to £2,000. But it is noticeable that, by and large, the same suppliers were chosen again and again. George Whicher, for example, was almost the sole provider of beef and mutton for some 30 years from the mid-1860s onwards and earned about £160 per annum from his workhouse contracts.

Besides these regular tenders there were occasional maintenance or improvement works required, which ranged from whitewashing the walls for just a few pounds to more major building work costing hundreds.

Havant Union

THE BOARD of GUARDIANS of this UNION, are desirous of receiving Tenders for the supply following ARTICLES, for two calendar months, from the 27th day of June instant.

Beef, Sticking Pieces, Shoulder, Clods, and Necks at per stone.

Beef, Shin and Legs at per lb.

Mutton, Fore Quarters at per quarter.

Bread, Best wheaten in 2lb.

Loaves at per dozen.

Flour, The Best at per cwt.

Cheese, Somerset, Gloucester, at per cwt.

Oatmeal, Sweet at per cwt.

Bacon, In Sides. Singed.

Potatoes, at per cwt.

Soap, Yellow at per cwt.

Candles, at per dozen.

Butter, Salt of good quality at per cwt.

Coals, Specifying the quality at per chaldron.

Milk, New at per gallon.

The above Articles to be delivered in mean proportions, at such times, and at such places within the Union, as the Board of Guardians shall direct.

Tenders to be delivered sealed and directed To the Chairman of the Union, at the workhouse office by ten o'clock on Tuesday the 23rd day of June instant, at which Union and place the persons tendering, or persons on their behalf, must attend. The power of accepting or rejecting any Tender to be absolute.

By Order of the Board, CHAS. B. LONGCROFT, Clerk to the Workhouse.

Copy of the blank document sent to those who wished to tender for the supply of provisions to the Havant Union. Tenderers would be required to indicate the prices at which they were prepared to supply.

Again successful applicants were almost invariably drawn from a fairly narrow number of tradesmen and craftsmen, the Stallard family, for example, being

frequently employed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Because virtually all of these people were local men, and because there were so many close connections, family, social and business between them and the Guardians, the potential for cronyism or nepotism was ever-present. Indeed in October 1892 this was precisely the charge levelled against the Tendering Sub-Committee by Joshua Mosdell when it was revealed that the contract to supply coal had been awarded to Samuel Clarke even though a rival tender had been 1d. (½p) per ton cheaper. The whole question of tenders was then hotly debated over the next few months. Did the Guardians have an obligation always to accept the lowest tender? Should tenders for basic perishable items be accepted from suppliers outside the Union's boundaries? Should tenders be considered by the whole board and not just a three man sub-committee? Finally should (as Mr. Mosdell proposed) all tenders be considered anonymously, with numbers replacing names? But in answer to all these questions the majority decision of the board was *no*, leaving the policy on the issuing and accepting of tenders fundamentally unchanged.

Master and Matron

The master and matron, who were invariably a married couple, were in charge of the day to day running of the workhouse. They were, it is true, answerable to the Board of Guardians, to whom the master had to report at each of their meetings, and the house itself was subject to regular inspections by the Visiting Committee as well as an annual inspection by a Local Government Board official. But as far as the inmates were concerned their authority was absolute and to disobey the orders of a master could be a criminal offence. In 1890 for example the Havant magistrates sentenced inmate Henry Rogers to seven days imprisonment with hard labour for repeatedly refusing to wash some vegetables taken from the workhouse garden. He was 67 years old.

In 1856 the master and matron were Edward and Mary Ann Fry, who had been in their posts for nine years. In March 1857 however they resigned following allegations, which were never substantiated, that Mrs Fry had 'ill-used' some of the young girls in her charge.

It was not until August that their replacements, James and Ann Weeks were appointed, but quite how the Guardians came to choose them is not clear. They were most certainly not from the usual background of such appointees, for workhouse masters at this date were frequently drawn from the ranks of ex-policemen, soldiers or prison officers. James Weeks on the other hand had, certainly until 1854, been a grocer and tea dealer at Ryde on the Isle of Wight. Moreover neither he nor his wife

had any apparent experience of poor law administration or any connections with the Havant area.

During their stay at Havant James acquired both land and property, including a fine house in Tower Street, Emsworth. He also became a director of the Havant Gas Company and was an enthusiastic Freemason who was, for a while, Grand Master of the local lodge. From 1860 he was also Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths and later became (most unusually) the Union's Relieving Officer as well, each post earning him an additional salary on top of his £70 per annum as Workhouse Master.

It must have been rare indeed for a Workhouse Master to become such a prominent and well-connected member of the local community.

Mr and Mrs Weeks eventually retired in 1881 and during the 24 years they were in charge never seem to have had anything but the most cordial relations with the board. Indeed upon their retirement the Guardians granted James a pension of £50 per annum and Ann £30 per annum, though they scarcely seem to have been in great need of it.

The new master and matron, Henry and Ellen Cox, resigned (for reasons unknown) just a couple of months after their appointment, and in their place the Guardians selected Alfred and Mary Collins, who had been the master and matron of the New Alresford Workhouse. It was not a happy choice. By June 1882, when they had only been in their posts for eight months, the Visiting Committee had already issued a report commenting unfavourably on their conduct, although at a special meeting, held in July, a motion to dismiss them was defeated by eight votes to five. In November however the clerk was instructed to write to the Local Government Board:

Upon the question as to the right of a Guardian to go over the house at any time by himself, and the power to order a master out of a room,

which was clearly a sign that all was not well. But before the Local Government Board could give their ruling Mr and Mrs Collins tendered their resignations on 14 December and left without serving the one-month notice to which they were entitled. At the next board meeting, a fortnight later, a motion praising Mr and Mrs Collins and proposing that they be granted a testimonial was defeated, but only narrowly, indicating that the board were by no means unanimous on the matter. Even without references they found another position almost immediately as master and matron of Richmond Workhouse, Surrey.

Shortly after their departure a brief article appeared in the *Hampshire Telegraph* praising the Collins' running of the workhouse, claiming that *they have effected*

several judicious reforms of the institution. A week later a letter, signed 'Justice for All' was published in the same paper. It, too, praised Mr and Mrs Collins and stated bluntly that they had been forced to resign:

Almost entirely on the account of the continuous harassing and annoyance to which they have been subjected by two or three members of the Board of Guardians, who have found fault with almost everything they have done, and have gone prying about the workhouse at all hours endeavouring to find cause for complaint.

But, 'Justice for All' concluded, the real reason for this harassment was that Mrs Collins was a practising Roman Catholic.

This, perhaps, throws a little light upon sectarian tensions at this time. In the early summer of 1882 a campaign of violence by Irish Republicans was initiated, their most notorious act being the Phoenix Park murders in June, when the Secretary of State for Ireland was stabbed to death in Dublin. This led to a great deal of anti-Irish, and anti-Catholic, feeling throughout the land, and it does indeed seem that Mary Collins was Irish. (Ireland is given as her birthplace on the 1891 census, though in 1881 it is London). Moreover mention must also be made of another local incident which took place on 6 December, just a week before the Collins' resignation. In order to celebrate the establishment of a telegraph office at Waterlooville it was decided to hold a fancy dress parade, followed by a fireworks display and a bonfire, and upon this bonfire an effigy was burned. This was a figure in clerical dress standing in a mock pulpit bearing the words 'Another Churchman off to Rome'. A great cheer erupted when it finally caught alight.

In the Collins' place John and Grace Horril were appointed, and their 15 year tenure, like that of James and Ann Weeks, was trouble-free. But after their departure at the end of 1897 another period of instability ensued. Their replacements, Sidney and Grace Pullin, stayed for only two years before leaving to run the workhouse at Newton Abbott, whilst their successors, William and Isabella Dunn, lasted only from September to November 1900. They had come from Shepton Mallet Workhouse after resigning, so they had said *in consequence of some unpleasantness with the nurse there*. But after *lengthy correspondence* with Shepton Mallet the Havant Guardians clearly had misgivings about the Dunns' version of events and more or less forced their resignation. In their place they appointed Henry and Aurelia Ripp, who had previously been at the South Metropolitan District School, Sutton, Surrey, (See Church's Illustrated Sutton with street directory [etc.] 1880) an institution to train pauper children for industrial pursuits. They were to remain for almost 30 years.

Porter

The Porter's job was to ensure that no unauthorised persons entered or left the workhouse and that no illicit items, such as alcohol or tobacco, were smuggled in. He also locked the gates every evening at nine o'clock and unlocked them again at seven o'clock the next morning. He was, therefore, the official with the most contact with the outside world, and as such tended to be an unpopular figure. This, coupled with the long hours and the fact that only relatively young, unmarried men were considered suitable candidates, meant that the post was often a difficult one to fill.

This was certainly the case at Havant, where the job of porter was combined with that of baker at a salary of £20, later rising to £25, per year.

In June 1856 the workhouse did not have a regular porter, and one was not found until November when Joseph Broomfield was appointed.

Just four months later however he was dismissed for unspecified offences, whether by coincidence or not at exactly the same time as the resignation of Mr and Mrs Fry. He was replaced by a man called Brownjohn, but in October 1858 he left suddenly. The reason for his swift departure became clear the following January when one of the inmates, Mary Bennett, gave birth to an illegitimate child and it soon transpired that Brownjohn was the father.

By now the Guardians had come to the conclusion that a full-time salaried porter was unnecessary and the role was filled, at least for a time, by one of the inmates, a 14-year-old boy. When this came to the attention of the Poor Law Board they were most displeased and reprimanded the Guardians severely, but it was not until March 1861 that they even got round to advertising the post and when they did they received just a single reply, from one Richard Miles. Miles was taken on, but he too soon departed and for the next few years the post was held by a succession of men, all for just short terms, with lengthy gaps between the departure of one and the arrival of the next. Things improved after 1870 with first Thomas Cutler and then Henry Voller each remaining for several years. But when Voller resigned in 1881 more problems ensued. His successor, William Wall, lasted just a few months, and when his successor, William Chilcott, was recruited from Sturminster Newton Workhouse in October 1882 a letter was soon received from the Local Government Board withholding their approval of his appointment *pending an inquiry by them into his conduct at Sturminster Newton*. When this inquiry confirmed that Chilcott's conduct had indeed been far from exemplary he was removed from his post. Two more short-term appointments ensued, and although the next, Willett, remained for four years he too was forced to resign in September 1888 following the master's complaints

about his conduct. James Reeves succeeded him, but by July 1890 the Local Government Board was ordering an inquiry into his conduct after the master had complained of *irregularities* on his part. He was replaced in April 1891 by Jesse Holman, who lasted for a hitherto unprecedented eight years, and although his successor, William Waldron, did not stay long, his replacement, Samuel Bennett, was to remain for a full 20 years. By the turn of the century, at least, it seems that the job of porter at the Havant Workhouse had become a less undesirable one.

Inmates and Workhouse Life

It was often stated that the workhouse had a capacity of 200 but this must surely be an exaggeration, for only rarely did the number of inmates approach 120 and was usually about 60 to 80 in the summer months and 90 to 110 in the winter.

An analysis of the census returns of 1861 to 1901 shows that as regards the former occupations of the inmates the number of males classed as agricultural labourers declined whilst the number of general labourers, as well as followers of such trades as tailor, shoemaker, baker and bricklayer, rose. The great majority of females were either housewives or domestic servants. There was also a consistently high number of elderly inmates: many over 70, not a few over 80, and even one or two over 90. Finally we may note that, even by 1901, the great majority had been born locally.

The daily life of the inmates was rigidly structured, with the workhouse bell being rung to announce each new phase. It was rung as a signal for the inmates to rise at 7 a.m. half an hour after which the master would conduct a roll call. It was rung to announce meal times and at the start and cessation of work for the able-bodied. Finally it was rung as a signal for everyone to retire for the night. (The bell can be seen at Havant Museum. It is the only item of workhouse furniture or fittings known to have survived.)

The principal labour task, at least for the men, was picking oakum. (Oakum was the fibre obtained by unpicking old rope and was used for caulking, to make wooden ships watertight.) It was dull, arduous work which made the fingers sore. It was very commonly prescribed in workhouses and was also frequently given to convicts. In 1898 it was deemed that the Havant inmates must pick at least four pounds weight per day. Some of the men, however, would have been employed in the garden, whilst most of the women would have been detailed to assist with the running of the house by washing, cooking and cleaning. Some of the women would also have been required to do needlework. Indeed for a time, in the 1850s and 60s, all of the uniforms and other items of inmates' clothing were made up in the workhouse out of rolls of cloth, mainly fustian and calico, bought in on tender from local drapers. Later

clothing was bought in ready-made but one needlework task that was required after 1892 was the sewing of shrouds for inmates who had died in the workhouse.

Sunday was the only day of the week upon which work was not required. On Sunday morning there would invariably be a religious service conducted by a Chaplain (appointed by the Guardians) in the dining hall. The rest of the day would be spent in enforced idleness. Books and magazines were occasionally donated for the inmates' use, but such reading matter is unlikely to have been greatly stimulating and there would have been little else in the form of recreation on offer. The children were, however, weather permitting, taken out for a walk.

The only other days on which work was suspended were Christmas Day and 'special' occasions such as Queen Victoria's Golden and Diamond Jubilees. Christmas Day celebrations, at least in the 1890s, consisted of a dinner of roast beef and plum pudding, the distribution of gifts, donated by Sir Frederick Fitzwygram and his wife among others, and a party. A few days later there would be some sort of treat for the children such as a visit to the circus or pantomime.

The children also had an annual summer outing. In the early years this was often to Leigh Park whilst in the 1860s and 70s it was to Purbrook Park, the seat of the then chairman of the Board of Guardians, Sir John Deverell. In later years it was more usually a trip to the beach at Hayling.

By the late 1890s life in the workhouse was becoming a little less austere and regimented. The wearing of uniforms was discontinued, greater freedom of movement, at least for 'deserving' inmates, was permitted, and rations of tobacco and snuff were granted for the men. But the principle of Less Eligibility still prevailed, and the Workhouse remained a place designed to deter as many as possible from entering its doors.

Vagrants (Persons without a Home or Job)

Vagrants, or tramps, were always a problem for the Poor Law. Under the Settlement Act every pauper was deemed to 'belong' to just one parish – if they had no permanent place of residence this was the parish in which they had been born – and was entitled to obtain relief in that parish only. But this legislation, together with other punitive measures such as the Vagrancy Act of 1824, had done nothing to curb the number of people, vaguely estimated in the early 19th century at 20 to 30,000, who wandered the country living a hand-to-mouth existence.

Nor did the new poor law improve matters. The 1834 Act ignored vagrancy altogether, and it was not until 1837 that union workhouses were obliged to provide

overnight accommodation for them, whenever possible in separate casual wards. All this did, however, was to create a network of what popularly became known as Queen's Mansions, allowing the vagrant to stay the night in one workhouse then move on to the next in an adjacent Union for the following night and so on. Various measures were introduced to deal with the problem but they simply resulted in a system that was both confused and contradictory. On the one hand the 'professional' vagrant was discouraged from using the workhouse simply as free board and lodging through various punitive measures. After 1842 for example a task of work would be demanded of him before his release in the morning, and that release would be delayed until 11.00 a.m. After 1882 he was required to spend two consecutive nights in the workhouse with a full day's work required in between, with complete isolation enforced whilst he was both working and sleeping. (Most new casual wards were constructed with individual cells, reminiscent of prisons). But then how could one ensure that all this did not also punish the 'honest' vagrant who had been forced to take to the road in search of gainful employment? On the other hand many Unions chose to relax this harsh regime and actively encourage vagrants to use their casual wards because this was preferable to having them sleep rough and cause trouble by begging or stealing. The only alternative accommodation for the vagrant was the common lodging house, by far the largest of which in Havant was at the Old House at Home public house in South Street. Here they were provided for in a large shed at the rear of the building.

Overall the trend was for the number of vagrants to increase as the century progressed with the result that greater provision was made for them in workhouses and this is clearly borne out in Havant.

The workhouse certainly had some sort of casual ward before 1873 but by this date it was deemed both inadequate and in a very poor state of repair. It was not until 1879 however that a new casual ward, complete with bathing facilities, was created and this was enlarged in 1887 when, for the first time, there was separate accommodation for female vagrants. Upon their reception vagrants would be bathed and given a bed for the night followed by a meagre breakfast in the morning. In 1866 the 'bed' was a straw mattress and a rug, the breakfast six ounces (170 grams) of bread. A task of work, probably oakum-picking, would then be required before release, although by 1892 complaints were being made that this was no longer being invariably enforced. Not long after this the topic of vagrancy became an increasingly urgent one because the mid-1890s saw a sharp rise in the number of vagrants throughout the country. This increase is reflected at Havant where in the period from March 1894 to March 1895 the number of vagrants admitted to the casual wards soared to an unprecedented 716. Although it soon fell quite sharply it was

proposed, in January 1896, to erect a new casual ward on land adjoining the east end of the workhouse then owned by Hampshire County Council. It was over a year however before the Guardians approved the scheme, and then only by the narrowest of margins. Some, like the Reverend Richards, thought that the money allocated for it of over £1,000 would be better spent on deserving causes like the aged poor rather than on *those wretched tramps who earned their living by thieving*. The new casual ward was eventually completed in 1898 at a more modest cost of £640.

Lunatics and the Mentally Deficient

Before the Hampshire County Lunatic Asylum at Knowle was opened in December 1852 most paupers in the Havant Union (as elsewhere) variously classified as 'lunatics', 'imbeciles' or 'idiots', as well as those suffering from other conditions such as dementia would have been confined in the workhouse with only the most disturbed or violent being confined, at the Union's expense, in a private asylum. But once Knowle opened its doors it took in virtually all these cases. In theory at least this was a great advance. Workhouses were relieved of the burden of coping with inmates they were utterly ill-equipped to handle whilst the paupers themselves were placed in a secure, purpose-built institution where trained staff could care for and, where appropriate, attempt to cure them.

This however came at a financial cost to the Union for the County Asylum charged for every patient they received. In 1864 Knowle's rate was 11s. 2d. (56p) per patient per week, and, although by the 1890s this had fallen to below 10s. (50p) (and from 1874 every Union was granted a subsidy of 4s. (20p) per patient per week) the cost of maintaining lunatic paupers remained a significant burden. There was, therefore, a strong incentive for Unions to keep the numbers they committed to a minimum, and to press for the earliest possible release of anyone deemed to be cured.

Yet despite this the numbers kept on rising relentlessly. In 1850 there were fewer than 10,000 paupers in the nation's asylums, but by the turn of the century there were over 90,000, and this national trend is reflected in Hampshire. When it opened Knowle received in total from the 23 Hampshire Unions fewer than 200 inmates. Yet 15 years later, in a building originally designed to hold a maximum of 400, there were over 600, and by the turn of the century over 1,000, despite many being removed to the Isle of Wight Asylum when it opened in 1896. Indeed so rapidly did Knowle become overcrowded that by the 1860s the authorities there were desperately urging Unions to take back as many of the 'harmless incurables' as they could. Thus on the 1871 census we find nine 'imbeciles' and three 'idiots from birth' in the Havant Workhouse. In many respects it was a step back to the pre-1852 days.

By the 1800s the number of paupers from the Havant Union at Knowle had risen sufficiently (it averaged about 25) for a Lunatic Visiting Committee to be established in 1876, and once a year they would visit Knowle to check upon the treatment of their inmates and ascertain the chances of any of them being permanently released.

Exactly what caused this inexorable rise in the number of lunatic paupers was a hotly debated topic in the 19th century, but increased urbanisation was undoubtedly a factor. Not only was urban living much more hectic, stressful and competitive it was also much less able to accommodate eccentric or deviant behaviour, and a good example of this can be seen at Havant with the case of Caroline Beaton. The order for her reception into Knowle, dated 12 December 1870, and written by the Workhouse Medical Officer, William Bannister, survives in the Hampshire County Records Office and from it we learn that Bannister had found her *wild in manner, using incoherent language, exhibiting herself in the streets and dressed fantastically... at the same time singing and capering about*. Her neighbours had also complained of her *singing and making noises* all night. In earlier times Caroline Beaton would probably have been tolerated as the local 'mad woman' and left alone. But by 1870 Havant was a community of some 3,000 people and Caroline herself lived in Somerstown, Havant's most overcrowded slum. Her committal was therefore almost inevitable. The rest of her life is a depressing tale. Over the course of the next ten years she was released, re-admitted and released again, but must surely have been in a disturbed state when she appeared before the Havant Magistrates in December 1880 charged with breaking a plate glass window at the Dolphin Hotel. (She escaped prosecution but was warned as to her future conduct). In February 1887 she was reported to be *wandering around apparently of unsound mind* and a few months later she was back in Knowle for at least the third time. By 1899 she had been released once more and was now in the workhouse, but soon her behaviour was giving cause for complaint and she was confined yet again – this time for good. In 1902 the Lunatic Visiting Committee found her bed-ridden and 'feeble with age' but she did not eventually die until 1912, at the age of 95.

It was unfortunately true that asylums were increasingly used as human dustbins for a variety of inadequate misfits and awkward deviants, but even when treatment was possible and cures attempted recovery rates were low and – as in Caroline Beaton's case – any 'recovery' was often no more than temporary. Thus every year after their visit to Knowle the Lunatic Visiting Committee would report that, although all of the inmates from the Havant Union were being well cared for, the likelihood that any more than one or two of them might soon be released was remote. The truth was that most paupers committed to an asylum would end their days there.

Treating the Sick

The 1834 Act made no reference to the sick within the workhouse and left the provision of outdoor medical relief, such as it was, unchanged. It was not until the late 1840s that Unions were obliged to provide a Medical Officer for each of their parishes (although for some time the Havant Union made do with just three) and the Medical officer for Havant Parish also became the workhouse doctor. For almost 50 years this post was held by just one man – William Bannister. By the time he eventually retired in 1900 at the age of 78 he was practically an institution and the Guardians awarded him a pension of £60 per annum; he was, however, a man often embroiled in controversy. In the late 1850s for example several complaints were made against him for falsely claiming attendance fees, and in 1874 the Guardians actually reported him to the Local Government Board for his:

General conduct towards the board, the sick in the house and parish, and Union officers [as well as]: his refusal to forward invoices for cheques issued to him by the board.

It was resolved that if he did not resign he would be dismissed. But when they received from him a letter of profuse apology and a promise to mend his ways they relented. Even as late as December 1899 however the workhouse master was complaining about *his mode of business and his treatment of him and other officers in the house*. He could clearly be a very difficult man to get along with.

The workhouse did not employ a nurse until 1882, although initially her duties also included looking after the infants, needlework and *generally making herself useful* – all for just £12 per annum. Unfortunately this was another position where no one seemed willing to stay for very long. By April 1885 the first incumbent, Nurse Underwood, had resigned and been replaced by Nurse Sweeney, although by now the salary had been increased to £25 per annum. Nurse Sweeney tendered her resignation shortly before Christmas 1887, but when no replies were received to advertisements placed to find her successor she offered to stay on. It was resolved however that she must leave, the reason being that: *she was found drunk on Christmas Day*. Eventually a replacement, Nurse James, was found but neither she nor her two successors, Nurse Hook and Nurse Darling, lasted more than a few months each; and when, yet again, repeated advertisements failed to attract any suitable replacement for Nurse Darling after her departure in August 1891 the Guardians turned to the Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association (WINA) for a temporary appointment. One was duly found and for the next few years a succession of WINA nurses was hired.

One area where special measures had to be taken was in the handling of infectious diseases, most notably smallpox but also measles, scarlet fever, enteric fever, influenza and a few others. What provisions were made to deal with them in the early years is uncertain but in 1858 the Guardians rented, and subsequently purchased, a cottage in Stockheath Lane for the reception of smallpox and other patients. This Pest House, as it was often called, remained in use until 1876 when the property was sold and a piece of land purchased at the end of the Union garden for *the erection thereupon of infectious wards*, although exactly where this might have been is uncertain. It was not until December 1880 however that the new buildings, costing nearly £1,000 and designed by the Portsmouth architect George Hudson, were ready to receive patients. Although invariably called a hospital it was in fact merely an isolation unit and had no extra dedicated staff, medical or otherwise. As part of the workhouse it was, strictly speaking, for pauper patients only, but there were instances of non-paupers being admitted, most notably the Union's Relieving Officer, Ernest Bryan, when he contracted smallpox in June 1883. This was much to the disapproval of the Local Government Board who repeatedly urged the Guardians to hand over the facilities to some other body so that they could be legitimately used for all cases of infectious disease. The Guardians however were unwilling to relinquish control over something they had so recently created at such great expense and suggested instead that non-paupers might be admitted *upon payment of such charges as may be fixed by the Guardians*. But the Local Government Board were adamant and eventually, in 1889, it was agreed that the isolation facilities should be run by a new body, the Havant Joint Hospital Board. It took more than three years for all the legal and financial arrangements to be made but the Havant Joint Hospital Board finally came into being in February 1893.

One of their first decisions however was to create a brand new Fever Hospital, with a permanent nursing staff, and by 1894 this hospital had been built, at a cost of £2,000, on land to the north-east of the workhouse which had been purchased by the Guardians in 1887. (The Wickes store now stands on this piece of land.) The old isolation unit, the largest and most expensive project the Guardians had ever undertaken, had been in use for just 14 years.

The Workhouse after 1900

As the 20th century progressed the Poor Law in general and the institution of the workhouse in particular became increasingly marginalised. Rather than wholesale reform – or even outright abolition – successive governments chose instead to create, piecemeal, a parallel system of relief that simply by-passed the Poor Law altogether and removed more and more people from it.

The most important innovations were old age pensions in 1908 and National Insurance in 1911, which compelled workers to make contributions from their wages towards a scheme providing relief in cases of sickness, invalidity or unemployment. In neither instance was their effect immediate but eventually they did a great deal to reduce both the aged and able-bodied populations of the workhouse. In addition, in 1915, the Local Government Board decreed that no child over the age of three should, unless sick, remain more than six weeks in a workhouse. If orphaned, or otherwise deprived of their parents, they should either, be boarded out, i.e. found temporary or permanent foster parents, or sent to an orphanage. One such institution was Shirley Cottages, a village 'colony' for some 400 orphans at Shirley near Croydon which received a number of children from Havant Workhouse in the 1910s and 20s.

The final 30 years of the Havant Union were not dramatic ones. There were none of the scandals or crises that periodically afflicted it in the 19th century, and the Guardians seem to have conducted their duties with a greater degree of competence. (There were also women elected to the board, the first being Miss Hodgkinson in 1902).

Before World War One the one major improvement to the workhouse was the arrival of mains drainage in 1908 and the one notable change in the workhouse's regime was the ending of oakum-picking as the labour task for the able-bodied males and its replacement by stone-breaking. In November 1907 the Guardians resolved that:

Subject to approval by the Local Government Board they break one cwt. (51kg) of granite to a half inch (12mm) gauge, for which approved stone-pounders have been purchased. The Local Government Board duly gave their approval and application was then made to the Urban District Council for a supply of stone.

The average number of inmates for this pre-war period fell slightly, never reaching 80 and often dropping below 60. There were 68 on the 1911 Census, with just five children under the age of seven but no less than 35 aged 60 or over – 20 of these being over 70. Birthplaces remained predominantly local. Labourer was still the most common occupation for males and domestic servant for females, but there was a slightly greater variety of other occupations including sawyer, saddler, fisherman, wheelwright and even one golf green keeper.

At the outbreak of the World War One there were fears that the conflict would bring increased hardship, but in fact the reverse was the case. By the end of 1915 with so many men in the Army and so much extra war work needing to be done at home,

able-bodied pauperism had – probably for the first time ever – effectively disappeared and workhouse populations everywhere decreased. As late as May 1915 Havant Workhouse still held around 55 inmates, but by December, when the number should have risen, it was just 44 and the Guardians were debating whether to meet only once every four weeks instead of once a fortnight as there was so little work for them. They eventually decided to do so in March 1916 and continued to meet every four weeks for the rest of the Union's existence. They even agreed to take in inmates from elsewhere. In January 1916 a dozen convalescents were received from the Westbourne Workhouse whilst in March 1918 a dozen more came from East Preston Workhouse (Sussex) when that was taken over for use as a military hospital. Even so, by December 1918 the number of inmates had actually fallen again to about 40.

The war, however, impacted in other ways. Annual elections for the Board of Guardians were suspended, directives from and inspections by the Local Government Board all but ceased and finding anyone to undertake even the most basic maintenance or repair work was a near impossibility. Proposed improvements, such as the erection of a new infirmary, agreed in December 1914, were now out of the question. Perhaps most profoundly of all there were shortages of fuel and food (leading to restrictions in the inmates' diet) and the price of all commodities rose steeply. In consequence, by the end of the war, all of the workhouse staff – which now included an assistant matron and an assistant nurse – had obtained salary increases in the order of 15 to 20 per cent.

The war-time boom lasted until 1921. There was then a severe slump of almost two years duration, and although it was followed by a recovery this was at best partial and the twenties remained a decade of high unemployment particularly in the industrial regions. Workhouse populations, however, did not rise dramatically for now, in addition to old age pensions and national insurance the Government was paying out tens of millions of pounds a year in War Widows' Pensions and Disabled Servicemen's Pensions to relieve hardship.

At Havant the number of workhouse inmates remained at around the war-time average until the middle of 1921 when it began to rise, reaching a peak of 60 in August 1922, the highest it had been since 1914. Thereafter, however, it declined again until by the late twenties it was averaging only 30 to 35 with an all-time low in June 1929 of just 27. Another economic downturn saw it rise again, but it was still only 36 when the Board of Guardians met for the last time in March 1930. There remained, however, two categories of pauper for whom the workhouse continued to provide the principal source of relief: vagrants and what were now termed the mentally deficient or feeble-minded.

The number of vagrants using the nation's casual wards fluctuated considerably. It rose steadily to just under 15,000 in 1909, fell equally steadily up to 1914, then plummeted during the war, until by the Armistice it was scarcely more than 1,000. But it rose once again in the depressed years of the 1920s, swelled by ex-servicemen, and by 1929 it was back to the level of 20 years previously. Treatment of this vagrant population continued to vary enormously from Union to Union encompassing, in the words of Sidney and Beatrice Webb *every degree of penal harshness and sentimental indulgence*. Not surprisingly the harsh regimes drove vagrants away whilst the casual wards of the lenient ones were often full to overflowing.

Havant seems to have been one of the more popular. In 1917 for example, when it was suggested that the casual wards might be closed, the Guardians were informed that no less than 165 vagrants (33 of them female) had been received into them in just six months, whilst in 1921 the master reported the admittance of *a large number of tramps* because so many of the other casual wards in the region had been shut. It also appears to have been Havant's policy to admit and discharge vagrants on a Sunday, a very unusual thing to do. The article on the workhouse in the original *Making of Havant* series, written in 1978 when many people could still recall the institution in its final years, gives us some insight into their treatment:

Men, women and children were all housed separately in the Union Workhouse. Entrance was through the porch, and the wooden floors and stairs were always scrubbed very white. Dormer windows gave light to the dormitories for the men and women, and the one for the women was always cheerful. There was also an infirmary for the sick and a casual ward for vagrants. The able residents helped to care for the sick, and worked to make the unit self-supporting, partly by doing laundry and gardening. The vagrants, or tramps, used the Union workhouses in line, e.g. moving from Brighton to Havant to Southampton, and so on. When they arrived at Havant, they queued at a door at the East side of the workhouse for admission to the casual ward. Once inside, they were deloused, given a night's rest and food, and in return gave a certain amount of help in the house or garden. Only vagrants with no money were admitted to the workhouse: those who could pay for their lodgings were sent to the Old House at Home public house in South Street where they were accommodated in a large shed at the rear of the building.

The inhabitants of the workhouse were originally those out of work, but in later years were mostly those unable to stand the stress of working and looking after themselves, and many were mentally retarded. The children were mostly those abandoned by their parents, and in later years were boarded out with families, the forerunner of present-day fostering. One interesting character in

the Union in the early 1900s was Tye Garnett. He was a simple old man, who was pleased to attend the Congregational Sunday School in Elm Lane, and sat in the class of older boys for the ten o'clock session. When the children went into the church for worship, Tye sat with them in the gallery, and left quietly with them during the singing of the psalm after the sermonet (talk to children). Tye always went on the Sunday School outing, and enjoyed the picnic tea, races and scrambles for sweets. He expected, and received, a prize at the Sunday School Anniversary for regular attendance, like the children.

In early days the inmates of the Union Workhouse wore uniforms but later on although uniforms were given up the clothes were still utilitarian and drab. Workhouse residents had their own pew in St Faith's Church. Burials were in (dreaded words) Paupers' Graves. Coffins, made first by George Outen and then by Mr. Stallard, cost about £1 and were trundled on a cart to the burial ground. Costs had risen sharply in half a century since, in 1860, the cost of a small coffin was 4s. (20p) and a large one 11s. (55p). The brighter side of life included annual outings in a coach, with tea. Mr George Blackman, one of the Guardians, took a great interest in all the work but particularly in these outings and provided gifts of sweets and tobacco. At Christmas time there were decorations and gifts from local families.

The terms mentally deficient and feeble-minded were somewhat vague but came to encompass an ever-expanding range of people. They certainly included those who in the 19th century had been classified as 'idiots' and 'imbeciles' but now also embraced anyone who might be regarded as mentally retarded or unable to fend adequately for themselves. Indeed in 1913 it was estimated that as many as half-a-million people could be so defined, and in the twenties the Webbs calculated that they constituted about one quarter of the entire workhouse population. The only data we have for Havant comes from the 1911 Census, where no fewer than 13 of the 68 inmates are categorised as 'feeble-minded', although the majority of them are of extreme old age. As early as 1905 it was recommended that this class of pauper be transferred to special institutions, and the 1913 Mental Deficiency Act gave County Councils the powers to erect them. But almost nothing was done until long after the war. In Hampshire it was not until 1928, with the opening of Coldeast Hospital near Sarisbury, that the county's workhouses began, at last, to be emptied of their 'feeble-minded' inmates.

The final years of the Havant Union's existence remained, by and large, uneventful. No great changes were made to the workhouse regime and nothing more than routine maintenance of the buildings was undertaken.

Henry and Aurelia Ripp remained as master and matron until June 1929 when they retired, to be replaced by Mr and Mrs Jakeway. By this time two other long-standing Union officials had also retired: clerk Edward Longcroft in April 1928, after over 50 years in the post, and the Workhouse Medical Officer AJ Norman seven months later. He had succeeded William Bannister in 1900.

One post that continued to be a problem however was that of workhouse nurse. Even after the Guardians had ceased to rely upon temporary agency staff nurses continued to come and go with some regularity, and not always under the happiest of circumstances. In September 1918 for example Nurse Collins was forced to retire after suffering a serious assault by one of the inmates whilst in September 1929 Nurse Quinn absconded after being seen to force large quantities of water down the throat of a terminally ill patient who died soon afterwards.

The Havant Guardians met for the last time on 6 March 1930. On 1 April the running of the workhouse and the administration of outdoor relief was handed over to the Gosport Area Public Assistance Committee of the Hampshire County Council and the workhouse officially became known as a Public Assistance Institution.

The records of this committee are not currently available, but the minutes of the General Public Assistance Committee of the County Council are, and they reveal that the fate of the Havant Workhouse was clear from the start. In November 1931 it was found to be the most expensive workhouse in the county to run, a fact largely attributable to the cost of the staff, whilst in May 1934 it was identified as one of several workhouses:

Which, by reason of their age, are costly to maintain in a proper state of repair and by nature of their construction fall short of present day requirements.

A special conference to debate its future was held in Havant in January 1935. It resolved nothing and officially no decision had been made as to its future. However at the end of March the casual wards were shut and the rest of the workhouse followed suit a year later. The remaining inmates were transferred to the workhouse at Fareham, which had recently been both refurbished and enlarged.

In 1937 the premises were offered for sale to the Havant Urban District Council, but they declined to pay the 'substantial sum' Hampshire County Council was demanding, on the grounds that:

As the buildings had originally been erected by the Havant Parish and Union, using local ratepayers' money, they had, in effect, paid for them once already.

Instead the Police Authority took over the site, but plans to erect a new police station

here were first postponed by the outbreak of World War Two and then abandoned altogether. The Havant Urban District Council did, however, purchase the workhouse garden for use as allotments. The old mortuary was utilised as a store and trading hut by the Havant Horticultural Society, although there were apparently some Havant residents who adamantly refused to set foot in it because of its previous use. These allotments survived until 1955 when the current fire station was built on them.

The workhouse itself remained derelict until 1947 when demolition finally took place. The site then underwent a variety of uses, including a civil defence and health centre, until the 1990s when the present day complex of flats named Longcroft was erected.

Havant Union Poor Rate Collectors in the 19th Century

The money to run the Union Workhouse and provide outdoor relief was raised by the levying of a Poor Rate, and four times a year the Union Rate Collector would set up a 'pay station' in each of the six parishes to which local ratepayers would come to hand over their contributions, invariably in cash.

The office of Rate Collector was therefore a position of some responsibility, involving the handling of several thousands of pounds, and consequently carried a considerable salary: £60 per annum in the 1850s, rising to £100 per annum by the early 1890s.

The identity of the very first Rate Collector for the Havant Union is unknown, but by 1851 the position was being filled by John Pullinger, a Havant resident who had previously been a cooper. Up until about 1860 Pullinger seems to have done his job competently enough, but in January 1861 it was suddenly revealed that there were rate arrears totalling no less than £1,774. Consequently the Union's funds were overdrawn by almost £400 (in 1856 they had been in credit by nearly £250) and the Treasurer, Mr Gilman, was refusing to honour any more cheques issued by the Poor Law Guardians.

If this seems like a crisis then the Guardians were anything but swift in dealing with it. It was not until August 1862 that Pullinger was summoned to appear before them, with all his relevant books and papers *to enable the Board to judge the state of the Union's finances* but we hear nothing more of the matter until the following June when the Treasurer was still *complaining of the state of the Union's accounts*. It was resolved that *arrangements shall be made for the better collection of the Union's contributions*, but whatever measures (if any) were put in place it made no difference. A full two years later, in July 1865 it was still being recorded that *the*

Collector has been unable to collect satisfactorily.

By this time Pullinger was 70 years old and it must surely have been the case that, for at least the previous five years, he had been too old and infirm to carry out his duties properly. The obvious course for the Guardians therefore would have been to replace him with a younger and fitter man at the first sign of his difficulties. But it was not until December 1865 that Pullinger finally tendered his resignation.

At least the man that the Guardians chose to replace him, the 33-year-old Elias Carrell, was a sound choice. He soon got the Union's finances in good order and at last enabled the Guardians to pay off all their creditors, which included a number of local tradesmen who had been awarded contracts to supply the workhouse with food and other provisions.

Carrell was another Havant resident born and bred and had previously been a grocer. For the next 27 years he formed his duties diligently, and indeed became something of a pillar of local government, for he also added Highways Inspector to the Havant Urban Sanitary Authority, Nuisances Inspector to the Rural Sanitary Authority and Superintendent Registrar to his duties during the course of the 1870s.

But in December 1892 the Auditor, examining his half-yearly accounts, discovered a deficit of some £200. Exactly what had happened is unclear, but there is no doubt that Carrell has appropriated the money for himself, possibly to overcome some temporary financial difficulties, and hoping to pay the money back before being found out. He was, naturally, dismissed from all his local government posts; but because he had repaid the money he had taken promptly, and because he had given over a quarter of a century of otherwise exemplary service, the Guardians decided to take no criminal proceedings against him. Indeed there was a great deal of sympathy for him, so much so that it was even proposed to grant him a pension of £10 per annum, until this was vetoed by the Local Government Board.

After his dismissal Carrell continued to live in Havant and found employment in the family building firm of G & R Carrell Ltd. (On the 1901 census he is recorded as a 'builder's manager' on the 1911 census as a 'builder's clerk'.) He died in 1916 at the age of 84.

With Carrell's departure the Guardians set about advertising for a replacement – and increasing the salary on offer from £100 to £150 per annum. They received well over 100 applications, from all over the country. But eventually, in March 1893, they chose the man they had originally installed as temporary Collector following Carrell's dismissal, Arthur Henry Wood.

Wood was 32 years old and yet another born and bred Havant man. His father, Henry

Wood, was the local postmaster and Arthur himself was a trained solicitor who was the secretary of a local Building Society and the manager of the Havant Town Hall. He was, therefore, well-known, respectable, trustworthy and seemingly an utterly safe choice.

He had been in his post for less than two years, however, when the District Auditor reported 'serious irregularities' in the half-yearly accounts that Wood had submitted up to the end of September 1894. These were later calculated to amount to a deficit of £1,013. Asked to explain this at the Emergency Meeting called by the Guardians on 2 March 1895 Wood claimed that *the irregularities had occurred in consequence of his carelessness*, but the Guardians suspended him with immediate effect and placed an advertisement in the *Portsmouth News* urging ratepayers not to hand over any more money to him.

A few weeks later, before the full extent of his fraud had been revealed, Wood disappeared, and although the Guardians offered a £20 reward for any information that might lead to his apprehension he remained at large.

Not surprisingly this caused a sensation and the Havant Guardians came in for a great deal of criticism. Indeed at their board meeting on 30 May one of their number, the Reverend Wells admitted that *feeling in the town is very high* and urged that *as a consequence their hands, as a board, should be shown to be quite clean*.

Wood's fraud is, however, not quite as straightforward as it might seem, for when he was appointed Rate Collector he was obliged to put up a surety, or guarantee, of £1,000, which of course he had now surrendered. And, as at the time of his disappearance he was also owed some £27 in salary arrears, his fraud had actually cost him money. So he must have felt it necessary to disappear for some other reason and had taken the £1,013 of ratepayers' money simply to cover the loss he knew he would incur by forfeiting his surety.

By far the most likely cause for his disappearance has to be linked to his role as the secretary of the Emsworth, Havant & District branch of the Starr-Bowkett Building Society. This had folded in December 1893, whereupon Wood had nobly volunteered to do all the work involved in the winding-up process himself, without payment. By April 1895 he was even able to announce that he had managed to secure for the shareholders a rather better deal than they had been expecting. Nevertheless as this was shortly before his disappearance one can only assume that he had done some sort of 'creative accounting' with the society's assets.

Although Wood may have lost his £1,000 surety it did not mean that the Havant Guardians could recoup it all, for the money had been deposited as an insurance

policy with the Norwich & London Accident Insurance Company, who would pay out only £757 12s. 5d. (£757.62).

Wood evaded justice for nine years, but eventually he was arrested in March 1904 in Oxford where he had been living under the assumed name of William Gorse. He was at once brought back to Havant and appeared before the local magistrates at the beginning of April. He pleaded guilty to two specimen charges of fraud committed in the office of union rate collector and was sentenced to four months imprisonment with hard labour.

In July 1906 he emigrated to the United States, leaving behind his wife and family.

After the Wood affair the Guardians decided that a single rate collector for the whole Union was now just too big a job and henceforth appointed one for each parish (save for North and South Hayling which were combined). This did not entirely put an end to occasional minor difficulties with rate collection, but there were certainly no more frauds or scandals to embarrass the Havant Guardians.

The following extracts are taken from the article in Volume 2 of the *Making of Havant* series published in 1978

Life in the workhouse had its lighter side, as is evident from the following account in the *Hampshire Telegraph* for 22 September 1849 about the National Infant Union School and Sunday School:

The children of the above schools assembled in a large force on the 11th at the Rectory Field. The long procession of 276 children started from the schoolroom at half past two, and caused no small stir in the town. The peal of bells merrily greeted them as they passed the venerable church. A substantial tea was prepared for their regalement, consisting of nearly 70 gallons of that refreshing beverage, 14 gallons of bread, well spread over with eight pounds of butter, a marvellous supply of plum cake was then served round and was followed by a dessert of baked apples to the number of about 700. After this the happy groups gladly commenced the various games provided for their amusement. A slippery pole was climbed, races in sacks were run, apples in the water were bobbed after, money buried in sawdust was hunted for (with an eagerness which reminded the bystanders of "the diggins"). During this sport one of the Union boys dug up two 3d. pieces to his infinite delight, the rareness of such luck being to him sufficient compensation for the smallness of the total. There was also a game or two of cricket, skipping, bat and trap, swings, racing blindfold with wheelbarrows and a kite which soared to giddy elevation; the

whole enlivened for a portion of the afternoon by a German band. During the festivities, several of the neighbouring Gentry visited the ground, and amongst them Sir George Staunton and party. They appeared highly amused at the scene and Sir George with a ready kindness consented to bestow on a large number of youthful and some very tiny candidates, the various prizes which their good conduct had gained for them. The urbanity enhanced not a little the value of the rewards. After some pleasing vocal efforts by the different schools and a thrilling and united series of 'hurrahs' from the whole party, the joyous scene terminated, and the assembled parishioners and visitors retired to their homes filled with apparent satisfaction at witnessing such a display of innocent enjoyment.

The education of the children continued to be cared for and an advertisement in the *Hampshire Telegraph* for 25 August 1849 makes interesting reading:

Havant Union

Schoolmistress wanted for the Workhouse of Havant Union.

She will be required not only to attend to the moral and religious training of the children but to teach them industrious habits, in order to their afterwards being useful as domestic servants. She must be in every respect well qualified to fill the situation, will have to pass the Examination Board of the Government Inspector of Schools and will be subject to the Regulations of the Poor Law Board. The Salary (besides the usual rations of the workhouse) will depend upon the certificate of the Inspector, but will be not less than £25 a year. She will be required to enter upon her duties immediately after her appointment.

The Guardians' Minutes for 12 August 1856 gave details of the decision to sink a well in the workhouse garden. It was to be 3ft 9ins diameter by 15ft deep, @ 2s. (10p) per foot, and if possible to go to 20ft deep at the same price; if 4ft by 20ft deep , the price to be 3s. (15p) per foot. On 26 August Mr Barton was shown to have been paid £2 5s. 0d. (£2.25) for digging a well 15ft deep @ 3s. (15p) per foot. perhaps he encountered special difficulties to be rewarded at the higher rate.

The minutes for 19 September of the same year recorded that the tender of Mr James was accepted for colouring the outside of the workhouse and Boundary Walls, two coats, @ £4 10s. 0d. (£4.50) and the tender from Arthur Arter was accepted to paint the outside wood and iron, as before, for £6.

On 17 March 1857 the minutes showed a complaint from the rector, the Reverend Seymour, that certain girls sent from the workhouse to the national school had been

ill-used by Mrs Fry, matron of the workhouse. This was confirmed on enquiry. The Poor Law Board was requested to send an inspector to investigate. The girls were removed to the care of the relieving officer. Significantly, Mr and Mrs Fry resigned on 31 March to be replaced on 28 April by Mr and Mrs Earwaker. Eighty-four indoor paupers were listed in the Guardians' minutes for 1870, which also gave the cost of haircutting and shaving for one quarter as £2.

In 1871 the minutes reported an emigration to Canada for two boys, John Pitt and James Hoskins, both aged 15 years. They would be sent out at a maximum cost of £10 each for outfit and passage with the 'Brighton Association'.

Workhouse Treat

The children of the Havant Union enjoyed an outing. They were joined by the boys of the Purbrook Industrial School. By invitation of Mr Deverell they were invited to Purbrook Park. Tea was provided. Toys were given to the children 'some useful, some amusing' according to their ages. Mrs Deverall was assisted by Mrs General Napier, the Misses Napier, and other ladies and gentlemen.

Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle, 23 August 1884

The last master and matron were Mr and Mrs Ripp who were very popular. Mr Charles Best, the Relieving Officer, visited nearby families and allowed 5s. (25p) to 7s. 6d. (37½p) worth of groceries to those in need but *no intoxicating liquor or cigarettes*. These orders were given first to the Standings' grocery shop in North Street and later to Burge's grocery shop, also in North Street.

By 1935 the Union outings had become rather more sophisticated and the *Hampshire Telegraph* of 18 January recorded an outing to 'Cinderella' at Southsea for a party of the inmates of the Poor Law Institution by charabanc, with sweets, tobacco, etc. provided.

The Poor Law Act of 1930 gave control of the Institution to the County Council and the Public Assistance Committee took charge of the building. The new system met with some criticism and obviously had initial teething troubles. The local paper carried an article stating that the new Guardians of the Public Assistance Committee were 'merely ornamental' whereas the old Guardians under the Poor Law were 'exceedingly useful'.

The local paper for 11 January 1935 recorded that more changes were on the way:

A new chapter in the social history of the country opened this week when the Unemployment Assistance Board set out in its career as the national authority charged with the maintenance and welfare of the able-bodied unemployed. By the beginning of March the Board will have taken over from local authorities all able-bodied unemployed now receiving poor relief.

The need for the institution was coming to an end.

The *Hampshire Telegraph* for 18 January 1935 reported that at the Gosport Area Guardians' Committee, which now dealt with all the Institutions in the area, the question was again raised about the proposed closure of Havant's Poor Law Institution. Havant Council were dealing directly with the Ministry of Health and had received a reply from the minister that no decision had yet been reached. At the same meeting several members expressed concern that the patients were being given margarine, and a recommendation was agreed that patients should be given butter instead of margarine in all institutions in the area.

The welfare of the patients continued to concern the Guardians to the end. On 22 February 1935 the problem of butter versus margarine was again in the news. The Public Assistance Committee was to be asked to reconsider their decision that butter should be given only to patients recommended by their doctors. The Guardians wanted this concession extended to all patients. It was also resolved to ask the Public Assistance Committee what special arrangements were to be made in poor law cases and for institutional inmates for the King's Jubilee Celebrations.

The Guardians' Committee, meeting at Fareham, were told that Havant would shortly close its vagrancy wards in the institution as new wards were nearly completed at Fareham which would be more economical to run. Still no decision had been received from the minister about the closure of the Havant Poor Law Institution itself, and the Havant area sub-committee was continuing to protest about the closure. All the protests were in vain. The institution was closed in 1936 when the inmates were transferred to St Christopher's Home, Wickham Road, Fareham.

Some recorded costs of the Workhouse

Beef sticking pieces @ 6d. (2½p) per lb; Mutton @ 6d. (2½p) per lb; Suet @ 5d, (2p) per lb; Flour @ £2 12s. 6d. (£2.62½) per sack; Peas @ 8s. 6d. (42½p) per bushel; Rice @ 2d. (1p) per lb; Coal @ £1 3s. (£1.15) per ton; Ale @ 10d. (4p) per gallon.

Joseph Broomfield was appointed porter and baker @ £20 per annum plus board and lodging. Relief given to George Allen, able-bodied pauper of £2 2s. (£2.10) for the outfit of two of his daughters for service; and to Fanny Garnett for an outfit for service. Expenses of the Union, including salaries, was about £5,500.

A report to the Board of Guardians on 13 September stated that the Relieving Officer had paid out for two weeks a total of £60 6s. 1d. (£60.30) in money, £3 15s. 2½d. (£3.76) in bread and £5 0s. 2½d. (£5.01) in necessaries.

1862 – Another report to the Guardians on 12 August stated that the Relieving

Officer had paid out £25 4s. 6d. (£25.22½) in money and £4 17s. 7d. (£4.88) in kind. The clerk read a letter from a Frederick Chitty, late Lieutenant in the Indian Army, asking for an advance by way of a loan, and it was resolved that a loan of 12s. (60p) per week be granted on security of his pension. Out-relief was revived and cost that year £40 per week.

A complaint was made to the Guardians, and reported in the local paper, that the daughters of paupers were going out to service and that this would lead to immorality and discontent among the smaller ratepayers.

1877 – Expenses for the half-year ending Lady Day were £2,279 10s. 11¾d. (£2,279.55).

1934 – Gosport Area Guardian Committee, Havant Sub-Committee Report:

Out-Relief – The scale was for guidance and should not be considered a rigid one. It was 5s. (25p) for 30 hours work! Mr Blackman spoke for the poor with feeling... if the poor throughout the County were to be dealt with as some of the poor were at Havant, then God help them!"

1939 – The new regime did not believe in largesse either. The new form of assistance came under fire in the local press where it was reported that the scale of public assistance in Hampshire was very low. In evidence to refute this, the following figures were quoted for Havant for the week ending 1 April 1938 and for the corresponding period in 1939:

1938 – 162 persons cost £54 0s. 6d. (£54.02½)

1939 – 156 persons cost £52 2s. 0d. (£52.10)

A Personal Reflection on the Workhouse

Ralph Cousins

Many people delving into their family history find some connection with a workhouse.

One of my grandfathers was the George Outen mentioned in the previous article. He, like so many, gained employment from the workhouse by supplying goods or services. He not only made coffins but also attended the funerals helping to pull the funeral cart and acting as a pall bearer.

A story is told of one funeral where the deceased had requested to be buried at Hayling Island. Being a long and thirsty journey the pall bearers found it necessary to stop at a public house on the way for refreshment. They went inside for a drink and

left the cart and corpse on the forecourt. Something not likely to be seen today.

When George's sister, Harriet, became old and the family were unable to look after her she went to the St Christopher's Home at Fareham. This had formerly been the Fareham Workhouse Infirmary. I always wanted to visit her but was told that children under 14 years of age were not allowed. Whether this was true or not I do not know, it may have been an excuse to prevent me seeing the place.

Edward Outen, 1806–1868, my two times great grand uncle, was married to Elizabeth Wrapkins, 1811–1847. It would seem that after her death some of her children were put into the Havant Union Workhouse as her ninth child Edward, who was born in 1845, died there aged three in 1848. Their tenth child Martha Mary, born in 1847 and possibly the cause of Elizabeth's death, was in the workhouse in 1851 and 1871 according to the censuses. Martha had two children while in the workhouse by unknown fathers. William was born and died in April 1870 and Ernest Edward was born 1872 and died in 1876 aged four. Martha eventually left the workhouse and married John Underwood with whom she had four more children when they lived in Gosport. Martha herself died in 1909 whilst in the 'House of Industry' (another name for a workhouse), Gosport, her husband having died in 1895. She was not in the workhouse in 1901 so must have kept away from there for a while at least.

My other grandfather, Augustus Cousins, who had been a Havant parchment maker, found himself on hard times and was admitted to the Isleworth Workhouse Infirmary where he died at the age of 57 in 1917.

A distant relation I met up with some years ago was so pleased to see me as he had not been able to find out much about his family background. This was because his mother had been born in a workhouse and was ashamed to speak of it although it was no fault of hers. Indeed for all of us who have such connections it is difficult not to feel similar shame and guilt notwithstanding there is nothing we can or could do about it.

Although the Havant Workhouse closed in 1935 it was still in the minds of people of that generation. When I was young my mother would often say when we had had some upset *when I am old I expect you will put me in the workhouse.*



George Outen and his son, Leonard, who conducted paupers' funerals

The Emsworth Poorhouse

(Written circa 1937 by unknown author)



The former Emsworth Poorhouse in North Street

Over 100 years ago a local historian wrote: *The poor, for a series of years, have been a great and increasing burden on the parish.* So the present-day problem of the Public Assistance Committees is nothing new! The closing of the casual wards at Havant does not only mean the end of the chapter, but the opening of the books relating to the history of the local poorhouse.

But if the progress through life of many of the younger folk who have had to spend a period in the Havant Casual Ward could be revealed, it would be found that a good proportion have made good and proved the truth of the saying that many an honest heart beats under a ragged coat!

How many of our readers are aware that Warblington, too, had its poorhouse, and in the very heart of the town of Emsworth! Mr A. W. Rubick, a well-known local historian, reminds us that Emsworth's poorhouse comprised a group of cottages just to the north of the North Street entrance to St James's Churchyard. These cottages are still in a good state of preservation as private residences.

The poorhouse, built on a piece of waste adjoining Emsworth, was: *Granted by Thomas Panton, Esq. May 22, 1776, to several of the principal inhabitants, for a term of*

1,000 years, the survivor of whom assigned the home and premises to the rector, and his successor for the time being, in trust for the parish.

Oakum and Needlework

The building was sufficiently capacious for the purpose, and in March 1814, contained five men, seven women, ten boys, and nine girls. We are told:

The men, in mild weather, being old and infirm, pick oakham, the women are employed in needlework and household affairs; boys ten years of age work in the sail manufactory; those, under that age go to the parish school.

The men and women live in separate apartments, but eat together; the old people have three hot meat dinners, one soup dinner, two cold meat dinners, one bread and cheese dinner; for breakfast, bread and butter, except the boys and girls, who have gruel; for supper, bread and cheese and beer. The master is allowed £20 per annum for collecting the rates, and farms the poor at 5s. 3d. (26p) per head, and he supplies them with every necessary, except physic, wine, and spirits.

The parish school, upon Dr. Bell's system, was, we are further informed:

Established here by the zeal of the inhabitants, June 25, 1812. and occupies the workshops adjoining the poorhouse, divided into two apartments for boys and girls, in a neat and becoming manner. In March, 1814, there were 60 boys and 50 girls, who attended from nine till twelve and two till five, and were taught English, writing, and accounts. Mr. John Small, the master, who diligently discharges his duty, is paid £50 per annum. Mrs. Bevis superintends the girls' school, and receives £25 per annum.

Parents desirous of sending their children to the school had to apply to the Guardians, who admitted them at five years of age, and continued their education until they reached the age of 12.

This excellent institution bids fair to confer great benefits upon the neighbourhood, and we may look forward with confidence to a general improvement of the morals and conduct of the lower classes of the community, whose instructions and improvement have been hitherto much neglected.

The Hayling Poorhouse – Quaint Ways of Running It.

Portsmouth Evening News – 22 October 1932



North Terrace, where the poorhouse stood

The Parish of North Hayling, although now very much less in population than the sister parish of South Hayling, was in the earlier history of Hayling Island evidently the more important. A census taken in 1788 gave the population as being considerably the larger of the two parishes. The fact that North Hayling had its own poorhouse, whereas there is no trace of such an institution in South Hayling, seems to point to the same conclusion. The former poorhouse is now a row of picturesque cottages known as North Terrace.

In the year 1834 the parish workhouses were superseded by the Union Workhouses, the Act making the union instead of the parish the unit of local administration. The Havant Board of Guardians then took over the duties formerly carried out by the parish of North Hayling.

The parochial records of North Hayling are in good order from the year 1793, but those previous to this date seem to have been lost. The records show a monthly meeting, with accounts and minutes kept, signed by the churchwarden and two overseers, and being verified twice a year by two Justices of the Peace. The income as obtained by making a poor rate and there are many entries such as: *Cost of new book, 4s. (20p). Making book, 1s. (5p)*, but there is no record of clerical work beyond this. If

there was a balance in hand, it was stated that the overseers were in pocket so much; if a deficit, that they were out of pocket by so much for the month.

Some items of expenditure are in many instances most interesting. In May, 1796, there is this curious entry: *Paid for the men raised for His Majesty's Navy, £7 8s. 2d. (£7.41)*. One would not expect to find any reference to the County Rate in 1799, but the payment of £5 19s. 6d. (£5.97½p) with stamp 2d. (1p) is so entered, whilst further entries state that the Overseers paid the Vagrants Tax for a similar amount. They also paid: *Joseph Parr's lodgings in the Small-Pox, 10s. 6d. (52½p)* and at a later date there is an entry: *For journey expenses to Fareham for the examination of the same man, 18s. 9d. (94p)*, evidently to satisfy the authorities that he had recovered.

James Guy was paid for relief, and for 'doctor's stuff,' 3s. 6d. (17½p). Another entry is: *For going to the Crownner, 2s. (10p)*, and on the same date: *For burying a man, 2s. (10p)*. On another occasion: *1 gallon of beer for master Aldent's burial*. There appears to be some connexion between the entries which follow each other: *Beer and Hollands to Peter Brown, 5s. 9d. (29p)*. *Paid the Clerk for digging Phebe Brown's grave, 2s. 6d. (12½p)*. Did the distracted widower require stimulating? Another curious entry is on one line without any stops. It reads: *Dame Renolds to bury her child 3s. 6d. (17½ p) yeast 3 pence 3s. 9d. (19p)*.

Burying appears to have been a thirsty job. Here is another entry:

Paid Mr. Bagley for burying of Sarah Patte 1s 9d. (9p) and one gallon of beer 1s. 4d. (7p) Mrs Pilling was paid 6s. (30p) for making a shroud, and Siam Lamar 5s. (25p) for digging two graves, whilst Mr Cutler was paid 12s 6d. (62½ p) for making two coffins.

Food purchases naturally occupy considerable space in the records. Pork must have been a prominent item in the menu, judging by the repeated purchase of fat hogs, some weighing over 22 score (440lb - 200kg), the price ranging from 8s. 6d. (42½p) per score. Pigs were evidently kept at the poorhouse, there being several entries of the purchase of pens for the poorhouse hog. One entry runs: *Killing a hog, with a man to help cost 4s. (20p)*, whilst 1s. 6d. (7½p) was allowed: *For going to see a hog*, evidently with a view to purchase. Occasionally there was beef, one entry being: *21 pounds bull beef and half head 5s. 4½d. (27p)*. Another item, which showed that the churchwarden sometimes did business with the house: *Paid myself for ½ cwt. and 4 pounds cheese 12s. 10d. (64p)*. Lard was 6d. (2½p) a pound, and butter 1s 4d. (7p).

The pay for work seems very little compared with our present-day standards. A day's work in the poorhouse garden was 1s. 4d. (7p). Dame Barber was paid: *3s. (15p) a week for nursing Ben Grist's wife, cutting 200 bundles furze was paid for with*

7s. (35p). Dame Couzens, for her day's washing was paid: 1s. 6d. (7½ p) and leasing 18 bushels of wheat 15s. (75p).

Relief in cash was entered as: *Let Dame Alwick have 2s. (10p). Let Old James Vick have 4s. (20p). Paid Ben Grout's wife 5 weeks at 2s. (10p).* Boarding-out prices seem quite fantastic compared with those of to-day. Thus: *Paid Master Bird for keeping Josiah Lomar 11 weeks 11s. (55p).* From another entry it evidently appears that the man had shifted his lodgings, as Master Reed was paid a similar sum. Farmer Kewell was paid: *£1 1s. 6d. (£1.7½p) for keeping Bill Chambers three weeks, and John Rogers £1 7s. 6d. (£1.37½p) for keeping Susanah Holt 55 weeks.* On January 18, 1807, on a page by itself, duly signed by the parish officials, is an entry as follows:

At a Vestry meeting in the Parish Church it was agreed that the allowance of 8s. (40p) a week to Richard Parr and his wife should be continued on the following terms, that they were to support themselves without any other aid from the parish.

Was this the forerunner of the present-day 'Means Test'?

In the Workhouse – Christmas Day

George Robert Sims



George Robert Sims was a Fleet Street journalist, and when he wrote this poem in 1903 it was immediately acclaimed throughout the English speaking world.

It is a rich, ripe slice of Edwardian melodrama. But Sims wrote it as a ballad of protest, presenting a heart-breaking picture of life as lived by what they called 'the lower orders' at the turn of the century.

It is Christmas Day in the Workhouse,
And the cold, bare walls are bright
With garlands of green and holly,
And the place is a pleasant sight;
For with clean-washed hands and faces,
 In a long and hungry line
The paupers sit at the table,
 For this is the hour they dine.

And the guardians and their ladies,
 Although the wind is east,
Have come in their furs and wraps,
 To watch their charges feast;
 To smile and be condescending,
 Put pudding on pauper plates.
To be hosts at the Workhouse banquet
 They've paid for – with the rates.
Oh, the paupers are meek and lowly
 With their "Thank'ee kindly, mum's!"
 So long as they fill their stomachs,

What matter it whence it comes!
But one of the old men mutters,
 And pushes his plate aside:
"Great God!" he cries, "but it chokes me!
 For this is the day she died!"

The guardians gazed in horror,
 The Master's face went white;
"Did a pauper refuse the pudding?"
 "Could their ears believe aright?"
Then the ladies clutched their husbands,
 Thinking the man would die,
Struck by a bolt, or something,
 By the outraged One on high.

But the pauper sat for a moment,
 Then rose 'mid silence grim,
For the others had ceased to chatter
 And trembled in every limb.
He looked at the guardians' ladies,
 Then, eyeing their lords, he said,
 "I eat not the food of villains
 Whose hands are foul and red:

"Whose victims cry for vengeance
From their dark, unhallowed graves."
"He's drunk!" said the Workhouse Master,
 "Or else he's mad and raves."
"Not drunk or mad," cried the pauper,
 "But only a haunted beast,
Who, torn by the hounds and mangled,
 Declines the vulture's feast.

"I care not a curse for the guardians,
 And I won't be dragged away;
 Just let me have the fit out,
 It's only on Christmas Day
That the black past comes to goad me,
 And prey on my burning brain;
 I'll tell you the rest in a whisper -
 I swear I won't shout again.

"Keep your hands off me, curse you!
Hear me right out to the end.
You come here to see how paupers
The season of Christmas spend;
You come here to watch us feeding,
As they watched the captured beast.
Here's why a penniless pauper
Spits on your paltry feast.

"Do you think I will take your bounty,
And let you smile and think
You're doing a noble action
With the parish's meat and drink?
Where is my wife, you traitors -
The poor old wife you slew?
Yes, by the God above me,
My Nance was killed by you!

'Last winter my wife lay dying,
Starved in a filthy den;
I had never been to the parish -
I came to the parish then.
I swallowed my pride in coming,
For ere the ruin came,
I held up my head as a trader,
And I bore a spotless name.

"I came to the parish, craving
Bread for a starving wife,
Bread for the woman who'd loved me
Through fifty years of life;
And what do you think they told me,
Mocking my awful grief,
That 'the House' was open to us,
But they wouldn't give 'out relief'.

"I slunk to the filthy alley -
'Twas a cold, raw Christmas Eve -
And the bakers' shops were open,
Tempting a man to thieve;
But I clenched my fists together,
Holding my head awry,
So I came to her empty-handed
And mournfully told her why.

"Then I told her the house was open;
She had heard of the ways of that,
For her bloodless cheeks went crimson,
 and up in her rags she sat,
Crying, 'Bide the Christmas here, John,
 We've never had one apart;
I think I can bear the hunger –
The other would break my heart.'

"All through that eve I watched her,
 Holding her hand in mine,
Praying the Lord and weeping,
 Till my lips were salt as brine;
I asked her once if she hungered,
 And as she answered 'No',
T'he moon shone in at the window,
 Set in a wreath of snow.

"Then the room was bathed in glory,
 And I saw in my darling's eyes
 The faraway look of wonder
That comes when the spirit flies;
And her lips were parched and parted,
 And her reason came and went.
For she raved of our home in Devon,
Where our happiest years were spent.
 "And the accents, long forgotten,
 Came back to the tongue once more.
For she talked like the country lassie
 I woo'd by the Devon shore;
Then she rose to her feet and trembled,
 And fell on the rags and moaned,
 And, 'Give me a crust – I'm famished –
 For the love of God!' she groaned.

"I rushed from the room like a madman
 And flew to the Workhouse gate,
Crying, 'Food for a dying woman!'
 And the answer came, 'Too late.'
They drove me away with curses;
Then I fought with a dog in the street
And tore from the mongrel's clutches
 A crust he was trying to eat.

"Back through the filthy byways!
Back through the trampled slush!
 Up to the crazy garret,
 Wrapped in an awful hush;
My heart sank down at the threshold,
 And I paused with a sudden thrill.
For there, in the silv'ry moonlight,
 My Nance lay, cold and still.

"Up to the blackened ceiling,
 The sunken eyes were cast –
I knew on those lips, all bloodless,
 My name had been the last;
She called for her absent husband –
 O God! had I but known! –
Had called in vain, and, in anguish,
 Had died in that den – alone.

"Yes, there, in a land of plenty,
 Lay a loving woman dead,
Cruelly starved and murdered
 for a loaf of the parish bread;
At yonder gate, last Christmas,
 I craved for a human life,
You, who would feed us paupers,
 What of my murdered wife!"
'There, get ye gone to your dinners,
 Don't mind me in the least,
 Think of the happy paupers
 Eating your Christmas feast;
And when you recount their blessings
 In your smug parochial way,
 Say what you did for me, too,
 Only last Christmas Day."



A postcard illustration of Christmas Day in the workhouse



The workhouse being demolished in 1947. The former police station and court room can be seen behind. The only fragments that remain are sections of boundary wall on the eastern and western sides of the site. Until about 2005 the old mortuary was used as a trading store by the Havant Horticultural Society. *Photo The News.*



The site of the workhouse is now occupied by an attractive development of flats named 'Longcroft'. They provide a far more comfortable standard of living to that experienced by previous 'residents' here.



Not Havant but a typical view of workhouse inmates



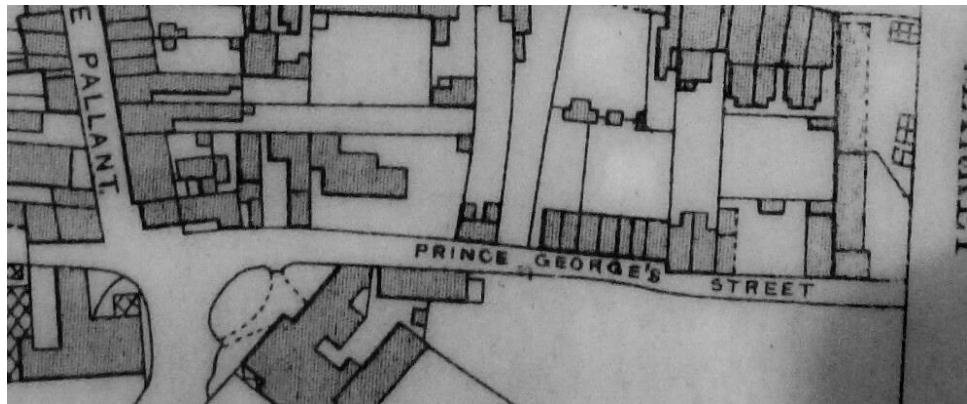
The Havant workhouse bell now in the
Havant Museum

The Rookery and Somerstown

Two of Havant's former slum areas

Robert West

The Rookery



Location of the Rookery – Prince George Street.

The area of Havant known in the second half of the nineteenth century as the Rookery lay on the western side of Prince George Street, where the entrance to the Waitrose car park is today.

The name is of some interest for it was bestowed upon many slum districts because of their supposed resemblance to rooks' colonies, i.e. roughly and precariously built, densely overcrowded, noisy and fractious.

Not all Rookery names denoted slums, of course. In rural areas a house, field, or farm might simply be named after an actual rooks' colony in the neighbourhood, and there is a local example at Lumley near Emsworth where a house called The Rookery existed until the mid-twentieth century, the name being preserved in a modern housing development on the site.

In urban areas rookeries were not just slums; they were specifically associated with crime, vice and depravity, and in them could be found the lowest, cheapest, type of common lodging house (where the sexes slept unsegregated) as well as thieves' dens and brothels.

The most notorious Rookeries were in London and some idea of their character may be found in a book published in 1850, *The Rookeries of London*, by Thomas Beames (text available online). Beames identified six principal Rookeries, the largest and most notorious being St Giles, just north-east of Charing Cross Road. Others were to be found at Jacob's Island in Bermondsey, made famous by Charles Dickens in Oliver Twist, Soho, Ratcliff Highway, Westminster and Saffron Hill near Holborn.

Just how common the name was outside London is uncertain, but there was a Rookery in Southampton, located just south of Hoglands Park, which was well known for its brothels. There is, however, some mystery as to how Havant's Rookery acquired its name. It is almost certainly not an old name as the earliest reference to it that has been found is in the Havant Board of Health minutes for 1854 where it is recorded that a letter has been received '*asking for a lamp at the Rookery*'. It is therefore likely that the name was coined at about the time that Beames's book was published and when its dubious connotations were well known. But why did Havant's Rookery get its reputation?

The 1842 Tithe Map of Havant shows the area of the future Rookery contained four small plots, (Nos. 484–487), that totalled little more than half an acre, with three different owners and three different occupiers who can be identified in the 1841 census returns as a bricklayer, a gardener and a shoemaker. But as each of these plots consisted only of a single cottage with a garden the area at this time could not be remotely described as overcrowded.

Unfortunately, in both the 1851 and 1861 census returns, it is very difficult to identify precisely which properties belong to the Rookery for no distinction is made between it and the Pallant and, to make matters worse, in 1851 the enumerator moved back and forth between the Pallant and North Street instead of dealing with each thoroughfare separately. It is clear however that this whole district was becoming ever more densely populated by such people as labourers, gardeners, and laundresses and their often large families.

It is only in 1871 that we get a proper snapshot of what the Rookery was like, because this time the census returns quite clearly identify what properties belong to it. As the Rookery now consists of seven properties it is likely that the four separate plots shown on the Tithe Map had been united, but when and by whom?

It is most likely that development took place after the arrival of the railway in 1847 with the most likely candidate for developer being the owner and occupier of Plot 487 on the Tithe Map, Thomas Holton. Although, in 1842, only a humble bricklayer Holton later became (like his elder brother Edward) a builder and the owner of

several properties in Havant and Warblington. Holton died in 1866 and a copy of his will survives in Hampshire Record Office. The will is unfortunately a brief and not very informative document that fails to list individually all his various property holdings, but some idea of his prosperity may be gathered from the fact that one of his bequests was '*all my pictures and paintings*'. Was this wealth derived, in part, from the rents he gathered as landlord of the Rookery? Unfortunately this must remain speculation.

The 1871 census returns show that the Rookery's seven properties housed a total of thirty-one people whose occupations included laundress, carpenter, groom, railway porter and engine driver, although this was almost certainly not the driver of a railway locomotive but someone in charge of a stationary steam engine. Only one of the properties, containing ten occupants, might be described as overcrowded.

In view of the facts we have, this does not appear to have been an area benighted by grinding poverty or riddled with vice, and by the time of the 1881 census this is even less the case, for now the properties contain a mere twenty people, whilst the very name Rookery has disappeared, to be replaced by the more respectable-sounding Prince George Street.

Somerstown

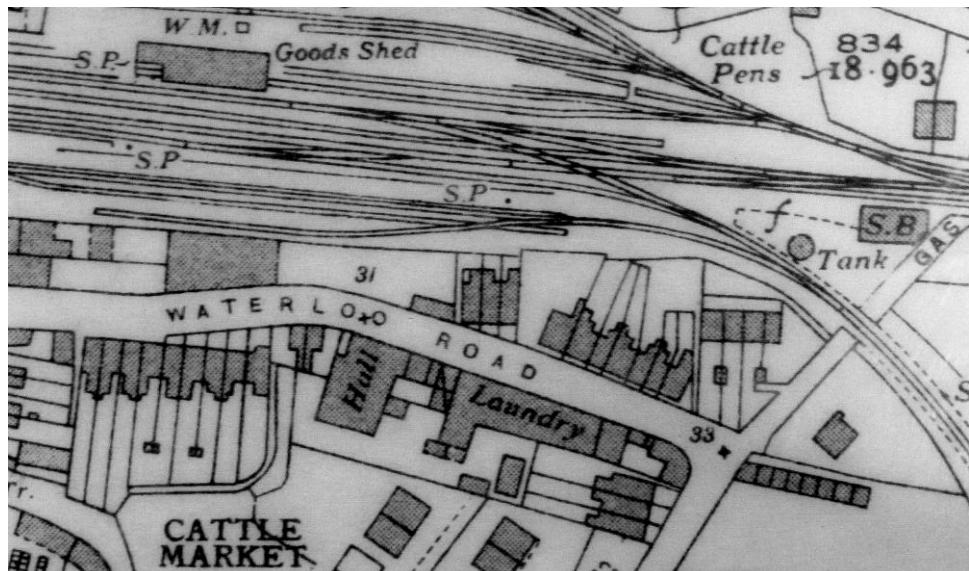


Somerstown Cottages in Fairfield Road circa1955.

In the third quarter of the nineteenth century Somerstown was probably Havant's largest and most overcrowded slum. Like the Rookery, Somerstown is not an old local name but its first recorded use appears to be in the 1861 census returns. It is most likely that the name was bestowed upon the area owing to its supposed

resemblance to a Somerstown elsewhere, and there are three possible candidates: the Somertowns of Chichester, Portsmouth and London.

Chichester's Somerstown grew up between 1810 and 1840 as a planned development of brick and flint terraced cottages for artisan workers. The origin of the name here is unknown although it may derive from its proximity to the much older Summersdale. Somerstown's poor drainage and sanitation made it by far the least healthy part of the city in the second half of the nineteenth century, but it was never a slum. Indeed, many of the original houses survive today as perfectly habitable dwellings. For this reason it is unlikely to have provided the inspiration for the name of Havant's Somerstown.



Somerstown Cottages (Bug Row) – the row of eight cottages in Fairfield Road at the top of Waterloo Road.

There is no mystery concerning the name of Portsmouth's Somerstown for it was developed in the 1820s on land owned by a Mr Somers. It was initially a fashionable district where, as late as 1851, there were '*genteel houses*' available to let. It was only by the 1860s, when it was described as '*a large and increasing district*' that it began its slide down the social scale, and only in the mid-1870s do we find references to '*the poor of Somerstown*'. Havant's Somerstown was well established by this date, so the Portsmouth Somerstown is also an unlikely model.

London's Somers Town – the area of NW1 between Euston and St Pancras stations – is, however, much more promising as a pattern for Havant's Somerstown. Again, we know the origin of its name as the development was commenced in the 1770s on land belonging to the Somers family, and again it was initially aimed at the well-to-do, but for some reason it stalled in the 1790s leaving many of the grand houses unfinished. Somers Town became a somewhat marginal area during the early nineteenth century, becoming particularly popular with French and Spanish political refugees. But it was not a slum; at least not until the arrival of the railway and the building of Euston station in 1837. Not only did this displace large numbers of people who decamped to Somers Town, it attracted yet more who came to work on the railway itself. So, from the late 1830s Somers Town became a classic Victorian slum and one, moreover, known particularly for its railway connections. It is this association with the railway, I think, that is the key, for it is almost certain that the creation of Havant's Somerstown was the direct result of the arrival of the railway in 1847 and the building of the original station and New Lane signal box very close by.

Certainly there was not much on the site of Havant's future Somerstown in 1842 when the Tithe Map shows that the area comprised just two small plots (Nos. 366 and 367) totalling just over three-quarters of an acre. One of the plots was an arable field and the other a cottage and garden occupied by one James Wilson who, according to the 1841 census returns, was an agricultural labourer residing there with his wife, two children and a lodger, a total of just five people. By 1851, however, although Wilson and his family were still there, seven more dwellings had been erected around them and in total these eight properties contained forty-two people including one household of seven and another of nine. By 1861, when the name Somerstown had been coined, there were nine properties containing forty-five inhabitants, hardly a dramatic increase, but by 1871 there were fourteen properties with no fewer than sixty-six occupants, five of these households having at least one member employed on the railway.

We have little idea of what conditions were like in Somerstown in the 1860s and 70s, but in the Board of Health minutes for June 1862 we get a record of a complaint made against one Somerstown resident, John Allen, for slaughtering horses in his yard there. Allen gives assurances that he will cease the practice, and so he did, but a few months later the Board received more complaints about him '*bringing horse flesh in an unfit state upon his premises at Somers Town*' and he was threatened with legal action if he should persist.

Not surprisingly, in April 1876, Havant's Medical Officer of Health, Dr Aldersley, reported to the Board that there was 'a good deal of sickness here' and plans were

made for a street drain to be laid from Somerstown to link up with the main sewer in North Street.

As in the case of the Rookery there is no direct evidence for who may have been responsible for the Somerstown development. On the Tithe Map and Award both Plots 366 and 367 are recorded as belonging to Francis Woodcock and although there were at this time two Francis Woodcocks in Havant (almost certainly father and son) it is more likely that the landowner was Francis Woodcock senior, who in 1842 was 72 years of age; rather than the younger, a pork butcher living in East Street. Woodcock senior died in 1849 and although his furniture and effects were auctioned off, his lands were not and as there is no trace of a surviving will it is not clear what became of his various properties that were distributed widely throughout the parish. Presumably these properties would have passed to his heirs and it is probably significant that we find in the 1851 census returns two unmarried sisters, Mary and Matilda, both described as '*proprietors of houses*', living with Francis Woodcock junior. Perhaps it was they who inherited the Somerstown lands in 1849 and decided to exploit their new potential.

The 1860s and 70s were the period of Somerstown's worst overcrowding. The 1881 census returns show a reduction to nine properties and thirty-four inhabitants, almost half the number of a decade earlier, and by 1891 there were just seven properties with twenty-six inhabitants. It is most likely, therefore, that as with the Rookery the old dwellings were demolished at some time in the late 1870s and new, more substantial, ones built. These survived until the mid-twentieth century when the existing block of flats replaced them. Unlike the Rookery, which has fallen into oblivion, the old name has survived – or one of them has, for it must be remembered that Somerstown had the alternative and perhaps more commonly used name of Bug Row which I have found in a document as early as 1870. It was also the name that appeared in press reports as the address of Somerstown's most unfortunate resident, the young Percy Knight Searle who was brutally murdered in the nearby Pallant in 1889. As to the origins – beyond the obvious – of this particular name however we have no clues whatsoever.

THE HAVANT BONFIRE BOYS

Robert West and John Pile



The Background, 1850-1878

By the early Victorian period it seemed that Guy Fawkes Night celebrations throughout the country were all but moribund. In the few places where they were observed at all they had usually degenerated into little more than a pretext for one or two high-spirited adolescents to let off fireworks in the street. Any kind of popular – let alone organised – commemoration was rare indeed.

But all this changed dramatically in 1850 when Pope Pius IX decided to sanction the re-introduction into England of a Roman Catholic hierarchy.

With the Jacobite scares of the 18th century an increasingly distant memory and the Catholic Emancipation Act removing virtually all discrimination against Catholics in 1829, it might have been assumed that the old sectarian fears of Popery had been banished from the popular consciousness. But the extreme reaction to the creation of the first Roman Catholic bishop in this country since the Reformation suggests otherwise. The Bull proclaiming Pius's decision had been issued in September, but

news of it only reached England in mid-October, just in time for it to achieve maximum impact on Guy Fawkes Night, and consequently the celebrations that year were unlike anything seen for a very long time.

Local press reports clearly reflect this. Here, for example, is the *Portsmouth Times and Naval Gazette* on the 1850 celebrations at Cowes:

For years Guy Fawkes has been a stranger to our streets and bonfires have been prohibited here. But the impudence of the Pope's Bull has brought them both to light again. There was a huge bonfire and the effigy of a cardinal was burnt. The surrounding country seemed to be in a blaze. No less than thirteen fires could be seen on the opposite coast of Hampshire and there was not a hamlet on the Island without one.

At Fareham, according to the *Hampshire Telegraph*:

The church bells were rung, a sermon was preached on the errors Catholicism. And: In the evening, by means of a general subscription, fireworks were exhibited throughout the town. A bonfire was also lit and an effigy burnt. At Titchfield there was a bonfire, fireworks and a parade with banners, for example 'No Popery' and 'England Expects Every Man To Do His Duty'.

Whilst at Gosport, according to the *Portsmouth Times and Naval Gazette*:

The 5th November celebrations passed off with more demonstrations of popular feeling than there has been for several years. A large bonfire was made near St Matthew's Chapel and one near Alverstoke. And the quantity of fireworks set off of all descriptions was immense.

1850 may have been exceptional, but it did mark the beginning of a resurgence in popular enthusiasm for Guy Fawkes celebrations. This was, however, increasingly at odds with the official attitude towards them, which was becoming ever more disapproving. In 1859 for example, the compulsory commemoration of the failure of the gunpowder plot in all churches – in force for 253 years – was abolished, thus marking the end of all state involvement in the celebrations. There also seems to have been a concerted effort made by the police and local magistrates in the 1850s and 1860s to suppress large-scale semi-organised celebrations. This could sometimes lead to trouble. For example, in Guildford there were near riots in 1851, 1854 and 1863,¹ whilst at Cowes we have a good local example of just how determined the authorities could be to suppress what seems – in this case at least – to have been nothing particularly serious. This is how the *Hampshire Telegraph* reported it:

Until within the last three or four years, the celebration of 5th November has been duly observed by our idlers, but with a degree of order that did them credit. Lately, however, a change for the worse has taken place and the streets have been filled with a concourse of disorderly men and boys. On one or two occasions the police have tried to suppress this nuisance, but in vain, for what could a score of policemen do when opposed by hundreds of ne'er do wells?

The newspaper then alleged that there had been a plot to attack the property of people who had complained about the conduct of the revellers, and that, in consequence, the police presence had been strengthened by the recruitment of 'specials'. Troops had even been put on stand-by in case things got seriously out of hand. But:

Happily the mob, cowed by these preparations made to curb any outbreaks, refrained from doing anything unlawful, and we hope for the credit of the town to have seen the last of these processions, which can do no good.

Judging from press reports, the places where 5 November was celebrated with greatest enthusiasm locally in the 1850s and early 1860s were Bishops Waltham, Titchfield, Fareham and – at least for a time – Gosport.

Gosport is an interesting example of how the celebrations could acquire extra layers of meaning, because for a few years from 1855 (uniquely, it seems) Gosport commemorated 5 November not only as the date that the Gunpowder Plot was foiled, but also when, in 1854, the Russians were defeated at the battle of Inkerman. Incidentally, they also made much here in 1858 of the 300th anniversary of the accession of Elizabeth, though that was actually on 13 November. However, the *Hampshire Telegraph* reported that the 1858 celebrations had been marred by the letting off of fireworks in the street, leading to fears that if this was repeated it could lead to future celebrations being cancelled. Whether or not such a ban was in force in the following year is uncertain – though the absence of any press coverage suggests that it was – but in 1860 the *Hampshire Telegraph* could record that:

The 5th November passed over this year with more than ordinary quietness. In the evening a group of five grotesquely attired persons paraded the streets [but] the demonstration, however, was miserably stupid.

And that seems to have been the end of Gosport's 5 November celebrations.

There are no press reports relating to Havant prior to 1864, but that does not mean, of course, that Guy Fawkes Night went unobserved here. Indeed, judging by the magnitude of the events of that year it is more than likely that some form of revelry had regularly been taking place. This suspicion is confirmed by the fact that we know

about the 1864 celebrations not from any reports of the time, but from the prosecutions that resulted from them at Fareham Petty Sessions about a month later, proceedings which the *Hampshire Telegraph* described as 'somewhat novel' and which they covered in considerable detail. Part of the novelty probably lay in the fact that eight of the thirteen accused were being prosecuted under the recently passed Gunpowder Act which introduced new penalties for firework misuse, but it must have been mainly because they were all youths from eminently respectable local families. They included Needham Longcroft, son of the solicitor (and a lord of the manor) CJ Longcroft; Anthony Lewis, son of the surveyor and auctioneer Charles Lewis; Richard Stedman, son of the surgeon William Stedman; and Alfred Stent, a junior member of the prominent parchment-making family. They all pleaded 'not guilty' and were represented in court by Mr Field of Gosport. The other five accused, who were described as either 'labourers' or 'navvies' had no legal representation and were charged with rolling lighted tar barrels around the streets.

From the report of the trials we can form a pretty clear picture of the night's events. In the evening a crowd of some 300 to 400 people gathered in the town centre and at about 9pm set off on a torch-lit procession down West Street almost as far as Bedhampton, returning about an hour later. In the meantime a bonfire was lit in the middle of East Street, piles of straw were set ablaze elsewhere and tar barrels were lit and rolled about, causing damage to at least one doorway. Many of the revellers – including Longcroft, Lewis and their friends – were in fancy dress or had disguised themselves with blackened faces or false whiskers. Despite the best efforts of Mr Field every single defendant was found guilty. The eight accused of throwing fireworks were each fined 5s. (25p) with 7s. 6d. (37½p) costs, whilst the tar barrel rollers were each fined 10s. (50p) (or, in one instance, £1 with 4s. 6d. (22½p) costs.

Were the events of 1864 significantly worse than what had gone on before, or were the authorities simply taking a firmer stand than usual in an effort to suppress a customary demonstration? If the latter, they were scarcely successful, for trouble flared again in 1865, albeit on a smaller scale. This time, a crowd of about 100 gathered during the course of the evening and, having commenced by giving 'three groans' for the police, marched up and down West Street and North Street from about 9pm until 10.30pm An effigy was also burnt (which the police put out) and a bonfire lit in West Street.

In all, eight people were charged with offences although only five were convicted. Thomas Voke was fined 5s. (25p), with costs, for throwing squibs in North Street and George Taylor was fined £1 with costs, for lighting the West Street bonfire. But the really serious punishments were reserved for those who, according to the police, had been the ringleaders conducting the mob. They were none other than Needham Longcroft, Anthony Lewis and Richard Stedman. If the magistrates – on their own

admission – had been lenient with the young men for their first offences the year before, they were in no mood to be lenient now. Each was fined no less than £5 with 7s. 6d. (37½p) costs.

This firm action had the desired effect, for we have no reports of any trouble for the next three years. Indeed, in November 1867 the *Portsmouth Times and Naval Gazette* commented on how quiet Havant was. But in 1869 there were more disturbances. A crowd of about 200 gathered in the town centre, a bonfire was lit in West Street and fireworks and fireballs (balls of coal dust and clay used to kindle fires) were thrown. Three people subsequently appeared in court: Henry Pratt, ‘a lad’, for lighting the bonfire; Charles Stallard, 15-years-old, for throwing fireworks; and James Johnson, an apprentice coachbuilder, for throwing a fireball. Stallard was fined £1, with failure to pay resulting in 14 days imprisonment with hard labour, whilst Pratt and Johnson were each fined £2 with failure to pay resulting in one month’s imprisonment with hard labour.

Again, a firm stand proved successful. True, the following year Charles Stallard made his second court appearance and was fined 12s. 6d. (62½p) for rolling a lighted tar barrel ‘along the turnpike road’, but this seems to have been an isolated incident which actually took place on the evening of 4 November.

In 1871, however, there was more trouble, resulting in seven Havant youths appearing in court. Six were charged with throwing fireworks and the other with lighting a bonfire in North Street. All had no previous convictions for Guy Fawkes Night offences. The chairman of the Fareham magistrates declared that: *The setting off of fireworks had been a nuisance for many years and he was determined to put a stop to it.* Consequently he handed out fines of between £1 and £1 10s. (£1.50p with seven days to pay and seven days imprisonment with hard labour for default. Once again, this seems to have had the desired effect, for in 1872 there were no reported incidents and 1873 was also quiet, save for the fact that on the night of 5 November, according to the *Hampshire Telegraph: A number of fires, which are supposed to have been the work of incendiaries, took place in the neighbourhood and caused much alarm.* A shed belonging to Henry Snook at Belmont Castle in Bedhampton was destroyed; another shed near Havant railway station was badly damaged; and two hayricks were also set ablaze. Was the date a mere coincidence or was something more sinister afoot?

In 1874 there were two more prosecutions for letting off fireworks for which fines of 10s. (50p) were imposed and in 1875 no fewer than seven people were charged, though all for minor offences for which fines of 1s. 6d. (7½p) were deemed sufficient.

This seems to have been the last of the trouble that Havant saw on Guy Fawkes Night, for both 1876 and 1877 passed off peacefully.

Bonfire Boys, 1878–1885

This suppression was to lead to two developments. On the one hand, almost universally, Guy Fawkes Night became an increasingly domestic affair celebrated by individual families in their own back gardens. On the other hand, in a very few places, it developed into a grand – but safe and respectable – public event organised by local bonfire societies or bonfire boys.

The pioneer in this respect was the most famous place in the country for 5 November celebrations – Lewes. The earliest bonfire societies here – those of Town and Cliffe – were founded in 1853 after years of mayhem during which local magistrates had struggled in vain to suppress the celebrations altogether. These societies established a form of ceremony which would be imitated elsewhere, including Havant, i.e. a torchlight parade through the streets with a band, banners and people in fancy dress, terminating at a big open space where a bonfire would be lit, effigies burned and a firework display mounted, all under the control of local middle-aged, middle-class professionals and trades people.

Unfortunately we do not know exactly who the original Havant Bonfire Boys of 1878 were, although they must surely have been, by and large, the same people who we know organised the 1880 celebrations. They included Henry Green, a solicitor; Thorburn and Albert Stallard, parchment makers and fellmongers; John Arter, ironmonger and whitesmith; and Charles Browne, Inland Revenue officer. These then were eminently respectable citizens, but it is revealing that in their inaugural year their application to the local magistrates for permission to organise a parade around the town was refused. Perhaps memories of the 1860s remained strong, and they had to make do simply with assembling in the Fair Field to light a bonfire, burn effigies and let off a few fireworks. These celebrations were so low key that they did not even rate a mention in the local press, and we know about them only from a speech given at the Bonfire Boys' Dinner of 1882 by Green, who recalled that a mere £2 had been raised to buy fireworks, but that even this modest display had scarcely commenced when a spark accidentally fell into the remainder of the stock setting them all off at once, and that finished the night's work.

Things went rather better in 1879 when a parade through the streets was permitted. £14 was raised to buy fireworks and the local press – the *Hampshire Telegraph* at any rate – gave the event a brief but complimentary write-up, commenting that the firework display was *excellent* and that despite a crowd of some 2,000 gathering in the Fair Field *the proceedings were very orderly*. This modest success must have emboldened the bonfire boys because the next year their celebrations were of an altogether greater magnitude, with no less than £50 spent on the festivities. The reporter from the *Hampshire Telegraph* was duly impressed:

In its brightest days the 5th November could hardly have been more enthusiastically celebrated than it was...at Havant. In most parts of the kingdom, and especially in the large towns, the custom has for years been gradually dying out, but in quiet decorous, easy-going Havant 'Guy Fawkes Day' is becoming more and more regarded as an occasion worthy of being marked in the most orthodox of fashions.

Events began at 6.30pm outside the town hall in East Street with a parade that marched around the town and ended up at the Fair Field. This parade is described in some detail. First of all came what are referred to as *pioneers* dressed in *fantastic garb* carrying torches and coloured flares. Next came a *commander-in-chief* in *showy uniform* mounted upon what is somewhat euphemistically described as *as warlike a steed as could reasonably be expected*. He was followed by his *Lieutenant*' and a banner bearing the legend 'Prosperity To The Bonfire Boys'. There was then: *a brass band grotesquely dressed, men in armour, a bishop, mace-bearers, and the effigies to be burned*. Finally there were the bonfire boys themselves in what was described as *full regalia*. Once they had reached the Fair Field the effigies were burned on a 30 foot (9 metre) high bonfire, and there was a firework display – courtesy of Messrs Brock and Co. – after which there was another parade around the town and the letting off of 50 rockets. It was estimated that 2,000 to 3,000 people watched the evening's entertainment.

An innovation of 1880 was the holding of a Bonfire Boys' Dinner to which, on 23 November at the Bear Hotel, some thirty guests were invited.

In 1881 the celebrations were at least as grand and the *Hampshire Telegraph* reporter's prose tried to match it:

On Monday, when the shades of night had fallen, the pleasant little town of Havant was in a state of agreeable excitement. All the inhabitants from babes in arms to the village patriarchs were in the streets, which were alive with train loads of sightseers from Portsmouth and the adjacent towns. The celebrations being of a magnificence that has not been paralleled [with] a daring if not reckless disregard for expense.

Indeed, £66 had been raised, £48 going on the fireworks alone.

On this occasion the parade began not outside the town hall, but outside the Bear Hotel, and again we have a detailed description. It comprised:

*The Bonfire Boys' Sergeant bearing the Crest of the Society
Beefeaters with torches and coloured flares
A banner 'Unity is Strength'
Harlequins and clowns
Bonfire Boys Brass Band
Knights in Armour on horseback
Pirates
The effigies to be burned
Robinson Crusoe and Man Friday
A banner 'Welcome Peace and Plenty'
'Bushrangers'
Dick Turpin and Black Bess (his horse)
A banner 'Success to the Bonfire Boys'
'Indians'
Borough of Portsmouth Coat of Arms
Members of an organisation called the Southsea Walrus Hunt
Remainder of Bonfire Boys' members and subscribers 'in full costume'*

The parade then proceeded to the Fair Field where a gibbet was constructed on top of the bonfire, the effigies hung from it and a policeman, Mr Charles Browne, recited their 'offences'. The bonfire was then lit and the fireworks let off; an impressive display that included some 200 rockets, the effect of which must, however, have been somewhat spoiled by a thick fog.

The 1882 celebrations were even more lavish, though they had to be held over to Monday the 6th, Sunday being deemed inappropriate. They took place, unfortunately, in what the *Hampshire Telegraph* described as: *The most wretched meteorological conditions it would be possible to conceive*, yet despite the cold and the rain the crowds turned out in even greater numbers than before, with special trains laid on from Chichester and Portsmouth.

Again, the parade began at the Bear Hotel and proceeded along East Street and North Street and then down West Street as far as the Black Dog public house, then back up North Street to the Fair Field. (For some reason the parades appear never to have gone down South Street). Once at the Fair Field the bonfire was lit, the effigies burned and the fireworks let off, with, as an added attraction, a very ambitious and elaborate re-enactment of the British Navy's bombardment of Alexandria which had taken place three months previously. However, this patriotic display was not a success, for the continual rain had made the gunpowder damp and it had to be abandoned. It was re-staged the following evening, but, inevitably, the crowd that

turned out to witness it was much smaller. In fact, the extravaganza resulted in a shortfall of funds, with £72 having been spent but only £67 raised.

Another innovation of the 1882 festivities was the reciting of a poem at the Fair Field just before the lighting of the bonfire. The oration was performed by Thorburn Stallard, the bonfire boys' honorary secretary, who, for no particular reason, was dressed as a Mexican. He began by making a few general remarks about the 5 November celebrations before turning to the big news event of the time – the war in Egypt, to which the bombardment of Alexandria had been the prelude. The war had, just a few weeks previously, concluded with a swift British victory over the forces of Arabi Pasha, and indeed it was Arabi Pasha and his ally, the Turkish Sultan, who were shortly to be burned in effigy. As Stallard put it, they intended:

*To burn the traitor, Arabi by name,
And also one who knew his little game,
Whose antecedent character is murky,
Of course I mean the Potentate of Turkey.*

He then moved on to more parochial affairs such as a dispute between the Local Board of Health and the fire brigade, and the appointment of a new nuisances inspector.

*Coming to Havant, I find that all is quiet,
Excepting that we nearly had a riot
Between the Local Board and Fire Brigade,
In which the Local Board at last were made
To rub names off a house, which I've heard said
A certain Batchelor once called a shed.
They also have appointed an Inspector,
To be of all foul smells a good detector,
We hope that by the streets it will be seen
There's truth in the old words 'New brooms sweep clean'.
But if the Local Board don't make him do it,
I only say that they'll be sure to rue it.*

The 1883 celebrations were probably the grandest of all and they were certainly the most expensive, with £73 being spent on them. They were, however, again blighted by the weather which was, according to the *Hampshire Telegraph*:

A chill November night that sent its cold rain and mist penetrating to ones very marrow: wild and murky overhead, cold and soggy underfoot.

Despite this, the crowds were huge (the *Portsmouth News* estimated 10,000) and the parade was, declared the *Hampshire Telegraph*: *Positively more gorgeous than it has been for some time past.*

The 1883 parade began in North Street and included:

Robin Hood (Thorburn Stallard) and his merry men; Bluebeard (C Furnice) and his wives; Mephistopheles (Anthony Lewis); [who, it will be recalled, had been prosecuted for his part in the revelries of 1864 and 1865] a buccaneer king (John Arter); and the ghastly and recently captured ghost of Knox Road' (A Winter).

This is curious as Knox Road, close to the boundary between Havant and Bedhampton, was a recent development and none of the houses there could have been more than seven or eight-years-old. Then followed:

Clowns, heathen Chinese, Ethiopians, and finally: A mob of brats, cats, rats, acrobats, aristocrats, plutocrats, democrats and red republicans.

Not only was the parade bigger than ever before, but it also took a more extensive route, journeying as far east as Denvilles and as far west as the Prince of Wales in West Street before its usual termination in the Fair Field. Here, once again, Thorburn Stallard delivered his poem.

The dominant theme this year was Ireland and all three of the effigies to be burned were Fenian conspirators: two involved in the infamous Phoenix Park murders of the year before and the other a 'dynamiter' (Dr Gallagher) who had recently been sentenced to life imprisonment. The firework display that followed must have been quite a sight, including, as it did, shooting stars, salvos of shells, jewel-headed cobras, aerial banquets, showers of ferns and – surely the *pièce de résistance* – a 700 square foot (65 square metres) representation of the Niagara Falls. Afterwards there seems to have been a considerable crush at the railway station as people struggled to pile onto the trains, although there are no reports of injuries.

1884 followed much the same pattern as previous years, including, it must be said, misfortune with the weather. Just before the commencement of the firework display it rained so hard that people were forced to run for cover. There was also a feeling that for the first time there was a scaling-down of the event as only £56 10s. (£56.50) was raised. The *Hampshire Telegraph* certainly considered the firework display to be less impressive than it had been, and the *Portsmouth Times and Naval Gazette* whilst proclaiming the occasion an *undoubted success* did nevertheless feel that: *The procession might not compare so favourably with that of previous years.* It seems, however, to have been a colourful and diverse spectacle which included:

Charles I and his court, a Mexican bullfighter, Herne the hunter, a pirate king, and an assortment of maskers, millers, mummers, mummies, monkeys, marines, mormons, missionaries, mermaids, mongolians, moravians, maniacs, mongeese and myriad millions.

The crowds too were as huge as ever, arriving by special trains, brakes and buses from as far afield as Portsmouth, Chichester and Petersfield. 4,000 alone were reckoned to have travelled in by train, and, according to the *Hampshire Post*, about 2,000 more were unable to purchase tickets. In fact, the numbers were so great that they actually hampered the parade's progress.

The 1885 celebrations differed significantly from those of the previous few years only in the fact that they were held in fine, dry, weather and surely no one amongst the thousands who left the Fair Field that evening could have guessed that the Havant Bonfire Boys and their spectacular extravaganzas were at an end, but that was indeed the case. Significantly, no Bonfire Boys' Dinner was held that year, and the following October there was a brief announcement in the *Portsmouth News* that there would be no celebrations in 1886 owing to a *deficiency of funds*. As far as one can tell, no subsequent effort was made ever to revive the bonfire boys or any other Guy Fawkes Night celebrations in Havant.

How could such a popular and by now traditional event, organised by some of the pillars of the local community, vanish so quickly and completely? If the bonfire boys had folded after their ignominious first year in 1878, or even after the over-ambitious plans and dreadful weather of 1882, it would not have been a complete surprise, but by 1885 their permanence looked assured.

There is no obvious answer, but it is worth remembering that there had always been dissenting voices that had questioned the celebration of Guy Fawkes Night in such an extravagant manner. The cost certainly distressed some people, such as the anonymous correspondent to the *Hampshire Telegraph* in 1882 – he merely signed himself *A Protestant* – who wondered: *Whether the money squandered on fireworks might not be better spent on soup kitchens and other charitable measures for the poor.* Others simply thought the celebrations *ridiculous*; in 1879 for instance the *Portsmouth News* used its 5 November editorial column to proclaim, a trifle optimistically, that:

The absurd custom of parading the streets with ridiculous effigies seems at last to have been all but done away with, and we hope that within a few years the beneficial effects of an enlightened education will entirely eradicate the proceedings.'

Two years later the newspaper renewed the attack, declaring that:

On the whole a more senseless celebration could scarcely be conceived, and the sooner it sinks into oblivion the better it will be for this enlightened age.

But there was another concern, rarely articulated but often implied, that, for all its light-hearted pageantry and spectacle, there lurked beneath the surface of the bonfire boys' celebrations a divisive sectarianism and political bias. This was certainly a notion that the bonfire boys and their supporters were keen to dispel – perhaps a little too often and a little too insistently, as though it touched upon a raw nerve. For instance, in his annual speeches at the Bonfire Boys' Dinner, their president, Henry Green, constantly stressed their impartiality. In 1881 he attributed the success of the celebrations to the fact that: *They had abstained from all party affairs whether in politics or religion*, whilst in 1882 he assured his audience that: *They were not a political or fanatic society but merely wanted to provide innocent pleasure or amusement.*

Everyone, therefore, must have been disturbed by events at Worthing in 1883 where the local Bonfire Club (formed in 1880) suddenly transformed itself into the Worthing Excelsior Skeleton Army, a mob whose sole aim was to drive from the town, by force if necessary, a recently established branch of the Salvation Army.

There is no suggestion that anything like that happened in Havant, but the charge of political bias is not one from which the bonfire boys can be wholly absolved, especially when one looks at their choice of effigies to be burned. Effigy burning had never been part of the earliest 5 November celebrations and was rare before 1670. Even after this date the figures to be burned were usually drawn from a limited cast of stock characters comprising Guy Fawkes himself, the Pope and the Devil. Only in the 19th century did it become the custom to select contemporary hate-figures – local, national or foreign – who had nothing whatsoever to do with the gunpowder plot.

There is only one example of a purely local figure being selected by the Havant Bonfire Boys for such drastic treatment. In May 1881, John Tremelling, an employee of the Havant branch of the Capital and Counties Bank, absconded with the several hundred pounds he had embezzled by systematically falsifying customers' accounts. Consequently his effigy was consigned to the flames that year. But usually national, and particularly imperial affairs dominated the celebrations. We have already seen that the Egyptian War in 1882 and Fenian terrorism in 1883 determined the effigies chosen in those years, whilst in 1884 it was the Sudan on everyone's mind. General Gordon had been besieged in Khartoum since July (and would eventually be killed when the city fell the following January) so it was the two leaders of the Sudanese revolt, the Mahdi and Osman Dinga who were burned. But when there was no great Imperial crisis or adventure to preoccupy them, the bonfire boys' choice of victim is

often revealing. On no less than three occasions, in 1879, 1880 and 1885, Charles Stuart Parnell, the parliamentary leader of the Irish Home Rule movement, was consigned to the flames, as well as his colleague Joseph Biggar in 1880. Whilst in 1881, together with Tremelling, Charles Guiteau, the assassinator in July of United States president Garfield; another Fenian terrorist O'Donovan Rossa; and the unlikely Mrs Annie Besant were chosen.

Why Annie Besant? True she had already gained some notoriety for her atheist views and advocacy of birth control and had come to prominence once more in 1881 through her championing of the atheist MP Charles Bradlaugh who was in the middle of a long battle to be allowed to affirm, rather than swear on the Bible, when taking his seat in the House of Commons. But did that really warrant her being lumped together with a fraudster, an assassin and a terrorist? It may have been thought that she had some local connection since she was the wife (though long-estranged) of the Reverend Frank Besant, brother of the well-known Portsmouth-born writer, Walter. However, that seems a tenuous link and Henry Green threw little light on the matter in his speech at the Bonfire Boys' Dinner that year. He was adamant that: *The only persons whose effigies had been burnt were those who by general consent deserved to be held up to public execration*, greeted with cries of *Hear, hear*. But with regard to Annie Besant herself he merely remarked, rather coyly, that: *They might have been a little discourteous to the fair sex, having burned a lady*. This was greeted with laughter.

So the bonfire boys were impartial only up to a point. Irish Home Rulers and atheists were clearly beyond the pale. The claim Green had made earlier in his speech about maintaining neutrality in all political and religious matters was simply untrue.

None of this explains why the bonfire boys folded, but it may help to explain why they did not re-form after what was probably no more than a temporary financial crisis in 1886 – they had nearly suffered one in 1884. Perhaps they had become a little too controversial and possibly appeared somewhat old-fashioned, even vulgar, for an increasingly sophisticated urban community.

Bonfire celebrations tended to flourish best in small market towns, for example Titchfield, whose bonfire boys were formed about 1884 and have been in existence ever since, and whilst Havant could just about be so-described in the 1870s, this was barely the case by the late 1880s, by which time many new 'villa' residences had been built and the limits of the town had expanded. Indeed, this expansion would devour the Fair Field in 1887.

It may be significant that the event that superseded the bonfire boys' celebrations in Havant's social calendar was that epitome of genteel respectability – the Chrysanthemum Show. The first had been held in the town hall by the newly formed

Havant Chrysanthemum Society on 7 November 1884 and was such a success that it became an annual event around that date thereafter.

This was the future – the Havant Bonfire Boys had had a glittering and spectacular existence, but in the end they were just like one of their own fireworks. Their splendour was purely ephemeral and once it had burnt itself out it could never be revived.

Appendix

John Pile

In the Saturday 25 June 1814 issue of his *Weekly Political Register* William Cobbett wrote:

Why is salt 20s (£1) a bushel, instead of 2s. 6d. (12½p) Because the maker of the salt has to pay 17s. 6d. (87½p) in tax, and in the expences appertaining to the tax. And do the people of Havant, who hanged and burnt Mr. Huskisson in effigy, suppose, that the grower of corn is not to be paid back the amount of his taxes as well as the maker of salt? The people of Havant (for this disgraceful act should be made known) formed a procession, having their victim seated upon an ass, followed by a chaise drawn by men. After parading about for some time, they arrived at a lamp-post, near the church, on which, after suitable admonitions, and exhortations as to the necessity of speedy repentance, the finisher of their law hanged him, while others were employed in making a fire, under the gallows, to consume the suspended body. The execution being accomplished, the mortal remains, viz. the ashes of the offender, were collected, placed in the chaise in a suitable receptacle, and carried away for interment, to the slow and discordant sound of broken bells and other instruments of hideous noise. Now, all Mr. Huskisson's crime was, telling the people very sensibly and very honestly, that, with our present taxes, they could not, upon an average of years, reasonably expect to eat their bread at less than double the price at which they ate it before the year 1792. He said further, that we could not expect to see the taxes diminished; and the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer has already confirmed his opinion: And yet the people of Havant have never, that I have heard of, petitioned against any tax; never against any expense; never against war with the Republicans of France, or with the Americans; never against any subsidy, grant, place, pension, barrack, or depot; never against any measure by which the public money was expended, and the taxes augmented, and the currency depreciated. What right have they, therefore, to complain of the high price of bread, in which price are included a large part of the taxes, necessary to meet the expenditure, of which expenditure they have never complained? They act as

foolishly, or rather, unjustly, as a man, who, after having ordered an expensive entertainment, should hang and burn the landlord in effigy for bringing in his bill.

The circumstances surrounding this event were various and complex. Napoleon's defeat on the field of Waterloo was one year in the future, but England's politicians, landlords and tenant farmers were already contemplating the economically depressing effect that the end of the war would have on English farming. The steady increase in the population of the British Isles was reflected in the census figures for Havant: 1,670 in 1801 and 1,824 in 1811. Havant's poor rate in 1800 raised £996, and by 1813 this had increased to £1,525, reflecting the increase in the number of its recipients than in any improvement in their treatment. The average cost, in London, of 4lb (1.8kg) of bread, had remained remarkably steady at about 8d. (3p) throughout the final decade of the 18th century, but during the ten years ending in 1814 it had risen to 13d. (5p). Agricultural wages had risen rapidly throughout the last decade of the 18th century resulting in a real improvement in living standards, but by 1812 wages had reached a peak and were beginning to fall. Agricultural improvements such as the enclosure of the common arable fields, common wastes, and forests; the use of labour-saving farm machinery; and improved cropping rotations benefited the landlords and their tenants, but often left the agricultural labourer worse off. The enclosure of the Forest of Bere (4,137 acres, 1,674 hectares) under Act of Parliament of 1810 and completed in 1814, affected all manorial tenants in Havant with rights of common in the forest, and, although not in Havant parish, the simultaneous enclosure of Emsworth Common (520 acres, 210 hectares) in Warblington Parish would have reinforced the perception of the landless labourer that his traditional world was collapsing about him with no immediate hope of a better one.

The government clearly had some difficult choices to make. Civil unrest was a growing threat and radicalism in a variety of forms had increased since the French Revolution in 1792. One idea, to alleviate the distress caused by increasing food prices and falling wages, was to regulate the supply of wheat by means of a duty on foreign imports which, it was hoped, would, by maintaining domestic prices, encourage agricultural investment and increase output. Not surprisingly, these measures, known collectively as the Corn Laws, became the subject of considerable debate both inside and outside Parliament which ended only with their repeal in 1849.

William Huskisson was born on 11 March 1770 at Birtsmorton Court, Worcestershire, and he spent most of his early life in Paris where he witnessed the fall of the Bastille. Shortly after returning to London in September 1792 he was introduced to William Pitt, prime minister; Henry Dundas, home secretary; and the

young George Canning, all of whom recognized Huskisson's potential and encouraged his political ambitions. Huskisson first entered Parliament as MP for Morpeth in 1796. In 1814 he was MP for Chichester and formulating crucial parts of the Commons' committee report on corn and advocating a sliding scale of duties designed to reduce the duty in times of scarcity and increase it in times of plenty. Despite Huskisson's declaration in a Commons debate on 16 May 1814 that 'The effect of the consequent variation of price (if there were free trade in wheat) on the poorer classes would be in the highest degree injurious', the poorer classes of Havant appear to have remained unconvinced that artificially maintained prices would be of benefit to anyone other than their employers.

From the date of Cobbett's article it seems unlikely that Huskisson's effigy was burnt as part of Guy Fawkes celebrations, but it is good evidence for an inclination on the part of at least one section of Havant's population to express its feelings in effigy-burning half a century earlier than our first records of Guy Fawkes activity in the town. Some of the details of the effigy-burning as described by Cobbett (probably communicated to him by a local correspondent) are remarkably similar to those in later accounts of Guy Fawkes celebrations, suggesting the possibility of some continuity during the intervening years.

Notes and References

¹ Morgan, Gavin, The Guildford Guy Riots (1842–1865), *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, 76 (1985) 61–68

² National statistics are from Mitchell, B R, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*, Cambridge: University Press, 1971. Local statistics are from *Victoria County History of Hampshire*, 1912 and Butler, W, *Topographical Account of the Hundred of Bosmere*, Havant, 1817

³ Hansard, 16 May

The Vestry and Local Board of Health

The study of local government in Havant in the 19th century is hampered by a lack of information. The most serious defect is the absence of newspaper reports on Vestry and Board of Health meetings until 1887 – an incredibly late date. (Alverstoke and Fareham, for example, were admitting the press to their Vestry meetings in the 1830s). Official documents are also sparse in the first half of the century. The records of the Havant Union do not survive before 1856 and the Vestry Books only cover the years 1834–51. The Board of Health minutes do, however, exist in their entirety.

Vestry

The Vestry in this period had four main functions:

- (1) Upkeep of the parish church, which was its original purpose. This was the responsibility of two churchwardens and was paid for out of the church rate.
- (2) Upkeep of the roads. This was the responsibility of two way-wardens and was paid for out of the highway rate.
- (3) Poor relief was paid for out of the poor rate. After 1835 when the Havant Union was created, which comprised of the parishes of Havant, Warblington, Bedhampton, Farlington, North Hayling and South Hayling, the Vestry's role was mainly confined to appointing three of the ten guardians who ran the Havant Union Workhouse.
- (4) Law and order. From 1842 seven parish constables were appointed and paid for out of a special rate of 4d. (2p) in the pound. Previously constables had been appointed by the Manorial Leet Court.

The Havant Vestry – at least in the period covered by the surviving records – does not seem to have been a particularly active body. They met infrequently; rarely more than five or six times a year and just once in both 1840 and 1841. Attendance, moreover, was usually sparse. Havant was an 'open' Vestry, which meant that all ratepayers in the parish could participate, but in the vast majority of cases fewer than a dozen people turned up to meetings, and often no more than four or five were present. The most frequent attenders were John Bridger Clarke, Samuel Clark (of Stockheath, not JB Clarke's son Samuel who was to figure so prominently in Havant's affairs later in the century) David Coldwell, GA Shawe and James Moore. Apart from their core duties the Vestry did very little, and the only substantial piece of improvement they undertook was the creation of the New Lane cemetery, which opened in 1851.

Local Board of Health

In 1848 the Public Health Act was passed which created a General Board of Health in London and permitted parishes to set up their own Local Boards of Health, with powers to inspect and control 'nuisances', pave and light the streets and provide mains water supply and drainage. Over the next few years Board of Health Inspectors travelled all over the country to examine the feasibility of parishes establishing Local Boards of Health, and on the 22 October 1851 one of them, Robert Rawlinson, arrived in Havant. His report, published a few weeks later, was strongly in favour of a Local Board of Health being set up, and of a comprehensive water

supply and mains drainage scheme (using the abundant local springs) being carried out.

Local opposition to the report was fierce, mainly on the grounds of cost and loss of local autonomy, since each Local Board of Health was ultimately answerable to the General Board of Health in London. However the Public Health Act stipulated that a Board of Health could be established if just ten per cent of ratepayers signed a petition in favour of one, and this is what must have happened in Havant, for in April 1852 it was announced in the press that the first elections for the Local Board of Health would take place in May. The board was to have 12 members, who had to be resident within seven miles of the parish and own property worth at least £500 or with a rateable value of £115 per annum. All ratepayers were entitled to vote, but not on the basis of one person one vote. Anyone with property worth less than £50 got a single vote; property worth £50 to £100 entitled you to two votes; £100 to £150 three votes; £150 to £200 four votes; £200 to £250 five votes and over £250 six votes.

The first board, which held its inaugural meeting on 3 June 1852, contained several people who had been prominent in the old Vestry, and some, like JBClarke and John Bulbeck, who had been amongst the most vehement opponents of a Board of Health being established in the first place. They appointed a clerk (CJ Longcroft), a collector of rates (John Pullinger) and formed a committee to undertake a comprehensive survey of 'nuisances'.

At first the board seems to have been remarkably enthusiastic. They paved, guttered and lit the streets (the Havant Gas Company had also been established in 1852) and even drew up ambitious plans for a mains water supply and drainage scheme, costing £13,000, just as Rawlinson had recommended. In 1853, however, this was quietly abandoned, and it wasn't long before the board settled into a comfortable laissez-faire existence, undertaking only the most modest improvements and removing only the most serious nuisances – these mainly arising from the abundant human, animal and industrial waste which beset the town. Nor was there much democracy. In theory there should have been annual elections since each year one third of board members were obliged to retire and seek re-election if they wanted to serve another three-year term. However after 1852 there seems to have been no election held for almost another 30 years, presumably because there were never more candidates than there were vacancies. Retiring members who wished to continue were returned unopposed, whilst those who stood down or died were merely replaced by the nominees of existing board members.

This obviously could lead to complacency, and by the late 1870s there must have been a growing feeling that the board had become little more than a self-serving clique comprising the most powerful men in the town (like the brewer and maltster

Samuel Clarke and the tanner Francis Foster) and their cronies. This may have been unfair, but the fact that, despite mounting pressure, the board resolutely continued to exclude both press and public from their meetings only fuelled suspicions. Matters came to a head early in 1879 when the Lavant Stream flooded the town for the second time in three years and the board was widely blamed for failing to ensure that the river channel had been properly maintained. (In 1875 it had officially become the Urban Sanitary Authority but everyone continued to use the old name.) So, probably for the first time since 1852, a local election was held in Havant, with eight candidates contesting five vacancies. This marks the start of a comparatively vigorous period of local politics, with elections held every year between 1879 and 1885 and most years thereafter.

Despite the optimism of one letter writer to the *Hampshire Telegraph* in April 1881 who was certain that: *At last old fogeyism and elitism are trembling in their shoes*, the old guard, led by Samuel Clarke, remained by and large in charge. But things were changing. Extensive improvements to and culverting of the Lavant Stream in North Street and Elm Lane were undertaken in 1879 and 1887. The recreation ground was laid out in 1890 and, at last, in 1887, the press were permitted to report on the board's deliberations. On the other hand they attracted considerable criticism in 1883 for their stubborn refusal to support a drainage scheme proposed by the Portsmouth Water Company designed to protect the purity of its supplies from the Brockhampton springs. *We simply ask to be left alone* was Clarke's response to it.

Indeed the failure to do anything about sanitation was probably the board's greatest defect, and by the time it was transformed into the urban district council in 1894 Havant was still without mains drainage. This was not to arrive until 1909.



Main drainage being installed in North Street.

HEALTH OF TOWNS ACT.

HAVANT.

At a numerously attended Meeting of the Ratepayers of the Parish of Havant, held at the Black Dog Inn, on Monday, the 12th of January, 1852, in pursuance of public notice, to take into consideration the Report of Robert Rawlinson, Esquire, to the Board of Health respecting the Sanitary state of the Parish of Havant, and to assent to, or dissent From, the adoption of the Recommendation of that Gentleman, That the Public Health Act [1848] may be applied to the Parish and Town of Havant.

SIR H J. LEEKE in the Chair.

The Report of Mr. Rawlinson was read, together with the Notification at the Head of the Report, that on or before the 26th Instant, written, statements might be forwarded to the Board of Health with respect to any matter contained in or omitted from each Report

It was proposed by Mr. LONGCROFT, seconded by Mr. BULBECK and resolved unanimously-

That in the opinion of this Meeting it is inexpedient that the Health of Towns Act should be applied to the Parish and Town of Havant, for the following reasons—

That although the population of the Parish of Havant is 2,416, yet the population of the Town is not more than 1,800, the difference being made up from the Hamlets of Redhill, Durrants, East, West, and Middle Leigh, Stockheath, Brockhampton, and Langstone, as shewn in the Map accompanying the Report.

The town and parish of Havant has always been considered a most healthy place and within the memory of the oldest Inhabitant, no Epidemic, or other Disease of a general character has existed That therein.

That during the visitations of the Cholera some years ago, and in the year 1819, not a single case appeared within the parish, although the adjoining

parishes of Warblington and Westbourne were visited with several cases, some of which were fatal.

That the parishioners are generally well supplied with good water, almost every house in the town having a pump or well, and those few who have not, are situated near the public pumps or springs, and are supplied therefrom, and in proof of the abundant supply of water in the parish, an Act is intended to be applied for in the next Sessions of Parliament for supplying Portsmouth with water from the springs at Havant.

That the stagnant refuse in the Lavant Course and Potash Ditch complained of in the report, can easily be cleansed once a week by penning the water at Mr. Clarke's Spring for twenty-four hours, and thereby flooding the course and ditch.

That by the erection of a few extra pumps the side channels of the Streets may always be kept perfectly clean.

That the Inhabitants and Ratepayers have every disposition to improve the condition of the Town where it can be done at a moderate expence, and for that purpose it is intended at the Annual Vestry Meeting of the Parishioners in March next, to take the same into consideration, but having recently born considerable expences in Repairing and Paving the Tows; in the Erection of a Cemetery, and in the Purchase of a Field for the use of the Inmates of the Workhouse, they feel themselves ill able to bear the heavy Expences consequent upon the Parish and Town being placed under the Public Health Act.

It was proposed by Mr. J. B. CLARKE, seconded by Mr. FOSTER and resolved unanimously—

That the Proceedings of this Meeting be copied; signed by the Chairman, and by as many of the Ratepayers (whether present at this Meeting or not) as may approve thereof. And that previous to the 26th Inst; the same be forwarded to the General Board of Health with an earnest request that the Public Health Act may not be applied to the Parish and Town of Havant.

(signed) Leeke, Chairman

Walter Scott, Printer.

Mains Drainage Comes – at Last – to Havant

Robert West

Mains drainage arrived in Havant in 1908, but the idea had first been proposed nearly 60 years earlier.

On October 21st 1851 Robert Rawlinson, an official from the recently-established General Board of Health, came to inspect the town and his report *A Preliminary Inquiry into the Sewerage, Drainage, and Supply of Water and the Sanitary Condition of the Town of Havant*, was published early in 1852.

Rawlinson was not impressed by what he found and recommended the installation not only of mains drainage but also mains water (both to be connected to every house in the parish) as well as mains gas and a comprehensive scheme of street lighting, paving and guttering, all to be undertaken by a local Board of Health, which would replace the Vestry as the town's local government authority. Havant, he said, was eminently suited to provide mains water and drainage because of its copious springs – less than one per cent of their output would amply satisfy all foreseeable needs – and the cost of establishing a waterworks would be minimal. Indeed he calculated that to implement all his proposals would cost each household a maximum of five shillings (25 pence) per year.

Despite this optimistic scenario Rawlinson's report was not well received and a meeting of those most implacably opposed to its recommendations was held on January 12th 1852 at the Black Dog Inn in West Street. It was attended by about 70 of what the *Portsmouth Times and Naval Gazette* described as *the most influential gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood*. In their opinion a Board of Health would be a monstrous imposition, whilst mains water was unnecessary because pure spring water was so abundant and easily collected for free. Moreover, whilst they conceded that there were problems with the disposal of waste, and that the watercourses were polluted, they insisted that:

The town of Havant has always been considered a most healthy place and within in the memory of the oldest inhabitant no disease or epidemic of a general character has existed there and hence mains drainage was an expensive luxury.

Nevertheless just three months later a Havant Board of Health was formed. This was because all that was required to establish one was a petition signed by a mere 10 per cent of ratepayers, which in Havant's case could scarcely have amounted to more than a handful of people. The first election of members took place in May and its first meeting was held on 3 June 1852.

Fired with enthusiasm the new Board at once drew up plans for a comprehensive mains water and drainage scheme, and even agreed to borrow £13,000 to pay for it. (The largest sum of money the old Vestry had ever spent on anything was just over £400). But whilst in other

respects the Board went a long way to implementing Rawlinson's ideas – gas mains were laid, street lighting installed and extensive paving and guttering was carried out – the water and drainage schemes were quietly abandoned in June 1853 and nothing more was heard of them.

But Rawlinson's concerns about the insanitary state of the town were fully justified. Human waste was (or at least was supposed to be) drained into cesspits, but all waste water - not only domestic but also that from industries such as brewing, malting, tanning and parchment-making -eventually found its way into the Lavant and Brockhampton streams. This was bad enough, but after 1860 it became especially serious when the Portsmouth Water Company built its waterworks in Brockhampton Road and used the Brockhampton springs – with the foul Brockhampton stream running close by – for their supply. At first Havant was not part of the Company's supply area, but even when mains water arrived in 1873 the prospect of having their own supply contaminated by their own pollution failed to prompt the Havant authorities into reviving their drainage plans. Indeed not only did they refuse to do anything about the matter themselves, they always vigorously opposed any measures taken by the Portsmouth Water Company to protect the purity of their springs.

When the company opened a second waterworks at Bedhampton in 1889 exactly the same problems were encountered, for here the springs were right next to the Hermitage stream, which received all manner of waste deposited into its headwaters at Waterlooville as well as at Stockheath and the west end of Havant. The Company eventually tried to solve the problem by constructing a diversion pipe, which conveyed the stream underground from the point where it flows under the Havant to Portsmouth railway line to its outfall in Langstone Harbour, and this was completed in 1897. But shortly before work on it commenced a seemingly trivial event took place which was to have momentous consequences.

Sometime in the autumn of 1895 two army officers garrisoned at Hilsea Barracks – Major Maycock and Surgeon-Major Porter – decided to undertake their own private investigation of the springs and streams in the Havant area. So appalled were they at what they found that they decided to inform their superiors at the War Office who, in turn, passed on their concerns to the Local Government Board, and they considered the matter sufficiently serious to send down one of their most senior public health experts, Dr Theodore Thomson, to fully investigate the matter in March 1897.

Thomson's report – *The Conditions Topographical, Geographical, and Sanitary of the Havant Districts (Urban and Rural) and their Relation with the Sources of the Borough of Portsmouth Company's Water Supply*, was published on 14 October 1897 and made for uncomfortable reading. At the Brockhampton springs, for example, Thomson observed that:

The houses in West Street near the springs have defective cesspits or in some cases no drainage at all. There are also washings from the chamois leather works [in Brockhampton Lane] and pollution from the tannery on the south side. As may be gathered from the

description of various matters that gain access to the stream its waters in the neighbourhood of the water works are greatly besouled.

The situation with the Hermitage stream at Bedhampton was equally dire, although as by now the diversion pipe was almost complete Thomson was confident that this would solve the problem. [Unfortunately it didn't for the pipe was far too small and could not cope with the flow after heavy rain, leading to extensive flooding and the occasional inundation of the springs.]

Exactly what the impact of the Thomson report would have been in normal times is difficult to say – after all a similar one published in 1886 had gone almost unnoticed. But October 1897 was not a normal time, for it was at the height of the Maidstone typhoid epidemic, the most serious outbreak of the disease in Britain in the entire 19th century. It had begun in August, and by the time it finally abated in January 1898 there had been 1910 reported cases and 123 fatalities. But the worst week of all – with 262 cases and 123 fatalities – was the very week in which the Thomson Report was published. And the cause of the outbreak? Pollution of the Maidstone Water Company's springs [which, like those of the Portsmouth Water Company had always been renowned for their purity] by sewage leaking into them from a temporary hop-pickers camp which had been set up nearby. The parallels with the situation at Havant could not have been closer or more alarming.

The Thomson report, therefore, caused a sensation. The *Portsmouth Evening News* decided to print it in full in five instalments over five consecutive issues from 5 November onwards and declared in one of its editorials that:

The grave character of the report cannot be disregarded and it is evident that the most important works will have to be undertaken without delay in order that the purity of the water may be maintained.

Even more alarmed by Thomson's findings were Portsmouth Borough Council and especially their Medical Officer of Health Dr Mearns Fraser. On 2 November the council held a special meeting to debate the report, as well as a separate one drawn up by their own Sanitary and Drainage Committee. The mood was febrile. One councillor declared that *they were living on the edge of a volcano*, another that *the people of Portsmouth were living in a Fool's Paradise* and that the report had come as a *thunderbolt*; whilst a third was of the opinion that whilst reports were being compiled and debates conducted *possibly thousands of our fellow townsmen are being poisoned*.

Whilst most of the criticism was levelled at the Havant authorities the Portsmouth Water Company by no means escaped censure, for it had long been unpopular. Despite healthy annual profits and generous dividends to shareholders the quality of its service often left much to be desired and its rates were deemed to be excessive. A growing number of councillors were in favour of running it as a municipally-owned utility.

Not everyone, however, was so concerned. The *Portsmouth Times and Naval Gazette*, for example, declared that *an attempt is being made to create a scare by the publication of the report* and was dismissive of *the hypothetical dangers hinted at*, whilst the Havant Urban District Council scarcely debated the matter at all and simply referred Thomson's report to their Sanitary Committee to consider *if necessary*.

The Portsmouth Water Company, however, did respond. In November it bought up nine properties in the vicinity of the Brockhampton Waterworks with the intention of demolishing them, and announced £45,000 of further investment to safeguard the springs. Then, in December, it made a formal complaint to the Local Government Board that both the Havant Urban and Rural District Councils *have made default in providing sufficient sewers*. This was a very telling move because it triggered a full-scale Local Government Board Inquiry, with legal representation for all parties and the power to call and cross-examine witnesses. In effect the Havant authorities were being put on trial.

The inquiry, which was held at the Urban District Council offices in West Street, opened on 14 December 1898, with Mr MacMorran QC and Mr Willes Chitty representing the Portsmouth Water Company and Mr Radcliffe representing the Havant Urban District Council.

Mr MacMorran opened the case for the Portsmouth Water Company by drawing attention to the insanitary state of Havant as outlined in the Thomson Report and outlining all the steps that the water company had taken over the years to protect their springs. He then called a string of witnesses. Mr William Corfield MD, an expert in public health, declared the state of Havant to be insanitary and a drainage system an absolute necessity; Mr Baldwin Latham, a civil engineer, estimated that a comprehensive drainage scheme would cost no more than £12,000; Joseph Quick, Consulting Engineer to the Portsmouth Water Company, insisted that *he had never been able to obtain any scheme of drainage from the Havant authorities*, whilst Mr H R Smith, Resident Engineer to the Portsmouth Water Company, stated that *speaking from a sanitary point of view words failed him to describe the abominable state of Havant*.

At this point the Inquiry was adjourned, but when it resumed on 23 December yet more witnesses for the water company were summoned. Mr W H Bailey, another of the company's engineers said that the Brockhampton stream was *in a very foul state and had been worse of late years* at times it was *very offensive and skins [from the tannery] were often placed in it in a condition just as they came from the slaughterhouse* whilst William Humphries, the company's water inspector, claimed that out of the 557 houses in Havant less than half (275) actually had cesspits. The water company's case concluded, however, on a lighter note when Miss Shaw of Southbrook was called to testify to the foul state of the Lavant stream which ran past the bottom of her garden and declared that *she had kept Aylesbury ducks upon it, but people refused to eat them*, which was greeted with loud laughter.

The Urban District Council, by contrast, called no witnesses of its own and relied solely upon Mr Radcliffe's cross-examination of the water company's witnesses and his closing address to the inquiry. Radcliffe (who was paid a fee of 70 guineas (£73.50) for his two day's

work) did his best to play a very weak hand. He claimed that it was the duty of the water company *who were not invited into the town* to protect their own springs, and that it was *extremely unjust* to expect Havant's ratepayers to contribute anything towards this. The present state of drainage was, he argued *if thoroughly carried out and properly administered... the very best system they could possibly have* and even claimed that Havant had a prescriptive (i.e. customary) right to pollute the streams which dated back to at least 1856. Finally, he urged the inquiry not to force a drainage scheme upon Havant *and thus bring it perilously near the borrowing limit and provide an everlasting burden on the town.*

But the Inquiry could really have only one outcome. In April 1899 the Local Government Board wrote to the Urban District Council, upholding the water company's complaint and giving them six months to come up with plans for a comprehensive drainage scheme.

Faced with little alternative the Council at last decided to act, and by September had complied with the Local Government Board's demands. Three months later a Drainage Committee was formed and by April 1900 arrangements had been made to borrow £17,000 to finance the scheme and an 11 acre plot of land had been purchased for a sewage works.

The fact that it was to be eight more years before Havant finally got its mains drainage was not, however, entirely the council's fault, for they found themselves caught up in a bureaucratic labyrinth which involved having to deal with at least seven different bodies – the Portsmouth Water Company, Portsmouth Borough Council, Hampshire County Council, the Local Government Board, the War Office, the Admiralty and the Board of Trade.

These last two were especially concerned with the problem of sewage disposal. The plan was to take the treated sewage from the sewage works (which stood on the site now occupied by the Langstone Technology Park) through an outfall pipe and deposit it in Langstone Harbour. But the Admiralty, who had responsibility for the state of all tidal waters, were particularly exercised over this matter, and the Council became embroiled with them in what was described as early as October 1901 as *voluminous correspondence* which continued for at least another five years.

Southern Sea Fisheries, a department of the Board of Trade, were also concerned about the impact of sewage discharge on marine life, and this became an especially sensitive topic following events at Emsworth.

In November 1902 an outbreak of illness after a banquet at Winchester [which resulted in the death of the Dean of Winchester] was traced to Emsworth oysters which had become contaminated by the discharge of raw sewage close to the oyster beds. The result was the collapse of the Emsworth oyster industry and a bitter legal wrangle over compensation which dragged on until 1906. As a consequence the Board of Trade were particularly anxious to ensure that such an event could never be repeated at Havant.

Another delay was caused by the need to re-adjust the local government boundaries. The drainage scheme was to be carried out entirely by the Urban District Council who proposed to charge its ratepayers a drainage rate (fixed initially at 1s. (5p) in the pound). But the Urban

District – essentially the old Havant parish - had a rather peculiar shape, being much longer north to south than east to west; indeed at its narrowest point, in Havant town itself, it was barely half a mile wide. Moreover at the western end the boundary actually ran along the middle of West Street from what is now Boundary Way to the Hermitage Stream bridge which meant that here the southern side of West Street was in the Urban District but the northern side was in Bedhampton and so part of the Rural District. Thus large parts of the Urban District, particularly Durrants and Redhill in the north, were never going to get mains drainage, and these two areas successfully petitioned the Local Government Board to be transferred into the Rural District. All of West Street, however, was going to be part of the drainage scheme, so here it was agreed to push the boundary of the Urban District westward as far as Hermitage Bridge.

There was a further adjustment to the east with the incorporation of Denvilles into the Urban District. The Denvilles estate had been laid out in the 1880s as a prosperous middle class development of detached and semi-detached villas. But it had been without even mains water until 1894 and by 1900 its inhabitants were more than willing to quit the Rural District of Warblington and become part of the Urban District if this meant that they could also acquire mains drainage.

By March 1906 all these issues were finally resolved and the Council were at last able to put out for tender for the work of laying the drainage pipes. That of R H W Neal Ltd of Plymouth, at £11,997, was eventually accepted and work started in October. It was done by gangs of navvies for whom the Council agreed to provide a Reading Room at Potash (now the site of the car park for Aldi, Wickes and other stores).

By November 1907 the mains had been laid, the sewage works had been built and properties were ready to be connected.

This task, however, took a further two years to complete, hindered by the fact that not everyone seemed to be convinced of the benefits of modern sanitation. Objectors included some very prominent Havant citizens, at least two of whom actually sat on the Council. One was Canon Scott, the Rector of Havant, who in September 1908 wrote to his fellow Council members stating that:

He did not propose to comply with the notice served upon him to connect with the main sewer as he had expended a large sum of money for the draining of his property into a cesspool.

Another was William Scorer, the photographer, who only reluctantly agreed to be connected when threatened with legal action and did his best to thwart the progress of the drainage scheme until he was voted off the council in 1910. Miss Hodgkinson of Elmleigh, the first female member of the Havant Board of Poor Law Guardians, also wrote to the Council in January 1909 stating firmly that *she did not propose to connect her house to the main sewer.*

But the objectors were fighting a losing battle. At the end of September 1909 the emptying of all cesspits in the Urban District was discontinued and over the course of the next few years the original drainage scheme was not only completed, it was actually extended.

By the outbreak of the First World War Havant was at last a properly drained town.

Charles Lewis

Surveyor and Auctioneer in Nineteenth Century Havant

Charles Lewis was a significant figure in Havant in the 19th Century. As the town's first – and indeed only – resident surveyor and cartographer he was responsible for the two earliest surviving large-scale maps of the Havant area: the 5 inch-to-the-mile map compiled in collaboration with his brother John Theophilus in 1833 and the Tithe Map of 1842. But he was also at one time or another an auctioneer, valuer, estate agent, insurance agent, enclosure commissioner and lithographic printer. One trade directory of the 1830s even lists him as an architect, although I can find no evidence for this.

He resided in Havant from about 1833 until his death in 1885, except for a brief period when he lived first at Fishbourne in West Sussex, then at Warblington. But even during this time he retained a house in the town and attended the occasional meeting of the Havant Vestry.

He was born in 1801 in the Kingston area of Portsmouth, the youngest of four children. Of his father, John, I have been able to discover very little, but in 1795 he was fortunate – or shrewd – enough to marry one Barthias Crasswell (née Rogers) a widow whose first husband, Anthony Crasswell, had been a farmer at Kingston. His lands were in the area around what is now Crasswell Street (near Portsmouth and Southsea railway station) a district that was beginning to be developed at the start of the 19th Century.

Indeed between 1807 and 1812 there are a number of advertisements in the *Hampshire Telegraph*, placed by Charles's father, offering plots of land in Kingston for building purposes.

In 1810 he acquired more assets when his own father (also called John) died. Fortunately a copy of John senior's will survives, and it shows him to be a man of some means. His principal occupation was tenant landlord of the Stokes Bay Inn near Alverstoke, but he also owned property in Gosport, was a dealer in timber and other building supplies and owned several bathing machines on the beach at Stokes Bay. As the only son (although there were a number of daughters) Charles's father would have inherited the bulk of this estate.

Unfortunately I can find nothing about the fate of either of Charles's parents, but the family must have retained some long-standing links with the Gosport area, for when Charles married in 1833 the ceremony took place at Alverstoke – despite him then being a resident of Winchester – and his bride, Martha Horwood Tayler, came from Blenheim Cottage, Bridgemary.

My knowledge of Charles's early life and career are also a blank, and the record of his marriage and the appearance of his name alongside that of his brother's on the Havant map, both in 1833, are the earliest references to him that I have been able to find.

This Havant map was just one in a series of a dozen produced for sale to the general public that the Lewis brothers compiled between 1828 and 1836. The eight dating from before 1833 bear John Theophilus's name alone, but since all of them are identical in style, and as the lettering is identical to that on Charles's solo maps (and very different to that on John's estate and tithe maps) it is certain that Charles must always have had a major input into the cartography (if not the actual surveying) of the entire series.

Fortunately we know quite a lot about these maps from advertisements that the brothers placed in the *Hampshire Telegraph*. In July 1837, for example, they listed all of them together with their dates of publication. Many are of areas in south-east Hampshire for as well as Havant we have Alverstoke (1832) Fareham (1832) Portsea Island (1833) and Hayling 1830. Also in Hampshire are Alton (1829) Bishops Waltham (1831) and Fordingbridge (1832). Others are Petworth (1830) and Kirdford (1836) in Sussex; Witley/Thursley (1829) in Surrey and Woburn and the adjacent parishes (1831) in Bedfordshire.

From other advertisements for the Petworth and Portsea maps we also know how much they cost. A plain black and white copy was 10s. 6d. (52½p); with boundaries and principal roads coloured in by hand 12s. 6d. (62½p), and the de luxe edition, with colouring and mounted on canvas with mahogany rollers 20s (£1). Copies would have been available from the Lewises themselves or from local booksellers.

When it was published the Portsea Island map also received a favourable mention in the *Hampshire Telegraph*, which praised its accuracy and concluded "*We are only surprised that we have for so many years been without such a useful publication*".

It is impossible to be certain just how successful these maps were, although judging by the number of copies of both the Havant and Portsea Island maps that survive these two at least probably sold quite well. By contrast however, I have been unable to trace a single surviving copy of either the Bishops Waltham or Witley/Thursley

maps.

The other interesting aspect of this series of maps is the fact that they were reproduced by the comparatively new process of lithography, and that the Lewises did their own lithographic printing.

Although it was invented in Germany at the very end of the 18th Century, lithography did not become at all common in Britain until after 1825, and it is in fact in this year that we find John Theophilus advertising his services as a lithographic printer in Winchester, the earliest instance in Hampshire. Lithographic printing remained important for both brothers throughout the 1830s, but especially for John Theophilus, who executed topographical and antiquarian subjects, portraits and commercial stationery as well as maps.

Making lithographic prints of their own surveys would certainly have helped to keep down their costs, but just how unusual was the combination of these two very different skills, especially at such an early date? I have certainly not come across any other examples, but even if it was not totally unique it would certainly have been very rare.

Charles must have arrived in Havant shortly after his marriage because in September 1834 he is recorded as attending a meeting of the local Vestry, something that only rate-paying residents were permitted to do.

But why did he choose to settle here? Perhaps he simply sensed a good business opportunity. Havant was, after all, a moderately prosperous and expanding market town of just over 2,000 people with no surveyor of its own, the nearest being in Chichester, Portsmouth or Fareham. But if there was one particular reason, the most likely was the close proximity of William Padwick. In 1827 Padwick, a local lawyer, had purchased the Lordship of the Manor of Hayling from the Duke of Norfolk for the considerable sum of £38,614 and thereafter tried to recoup his money by ruthlessly extracting every last penny that he could from all the various rights and privileges that he had acquired with the Lordship, most of which had long since lapsed under the Dukes' lax regime. This involved him in continuous – and very frequently acrimonious – litigation, and, as accurate maps were often essential pieces of evidence in court cases of this nature it would have been extremely useful for Padwick to have a competent surveyor close at hand.

There are unfortunately no surviving maps that Charles alone produced for Padwick (although there are a few that he compiled in collaboration with his brother or that John compiled on his own). But we do get some insight into the professional relationship that the two men must have retained over the years from the report of a

court case in 1852.

Ironically this time it was Padwick who was being sued by Charles himself, to recover payment for a number of services he had performed and for which he believed Padwick had not adequately recompensed him. These included drawing up a plan of Havant and travelling all the way to Dorchester to give evidence on Padwick's behalf in yet another of his legal actions.

But if Havant was a good place to set up as a surveyor, 1833 was also a very good time, because there was soon to be a tremendous increase in the demand for a surveyor's services, mainly from two sources: tithe mapping and the railways.

Under the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 all tithes which had previously been paid in kind were to be converted into cash payments, and in order for these payments to be calculated accurately it was decreed that every parish in the land should be mapped, with the exact area of each landholding measured and its value assessed. A Tithe Commission was set up to supervise this immense undertaking with the intention that it should be carried out by civilian surveyors (as opposed to the military surveyors of the Ordnance Survey) under the strict supervision of the Commission, with every map drawn to a uniform scale of 1 inch to 3 chains (66 yards). In the event these criteria were relaxed, and the maps produced varied both in scale and quality, and in some cases even pre-existing maps were used.

Tithe mapping constituted the major part of Charles's work between 1839 and 1843, during which time he surveyed seven parishes: Havant, North Hayling, South Hayling, Farlington, Wymering, Warblington and New Fishbourne (Sussex). The only local parish he did not survey was Bedhampton where a map drawn up just a few years previously was deemed adequate. This was more than most other surveyors employed by the Tithe Commission (who usually did only one or two parishes) produced, although a few were much more prolific. In Hampshire for example the Fareham surveyor James Blackman did seventeen, whilst Richard Gale of Winchester did no less than twenty-three.

In total Charles surveyed 16,251 acres, and if one assumes that he received the average payment from the Tithe Commission of 9d. (3½p) per acre he would have earned just over £600 for his work. He probably employed an assistant – he certainly advertised for one in the *Hampshire Telegraph* in 1839 – but he would have been able to claim expenses for him.

Tithe maps were drawn up in triplicate, one copy for the office, one for the parish clerk and one for the bishop of the diocese (EJ Evans and AG Crosby, *Tithes: Maps, Apportionments and the 1836 Act: a guide for local historians*, British Association for

Local History, 3rd ed. 1997). Consequently virtually all of them have been preserved – certainly all of Charles's survive and his copies for Havant, North Hayling, Farlington and Warblington are at the County Records Office. In the case of Havant a further copy was made for Sir George Staunton at Leigh Park and this, too, survives.

The survival rate for his other maps is, however, regrettably low. The three maps that he compiled in his role as an Enclosure Commissioner [considered below, p.9] have been preserved, but of his work as a private surveyor I have come across only three instances in the archives. Eventually the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey maps would render the private surveyor virtually redundant, but as these maps did not cover south-east Hampshire until the late 1860s estate work would have formed an important part of Charles's output for some 35 years, and so the great majority of his maps must either have been lost or remain in private hands.

The other major source of work for surveyors in the late 1830s and 1840s was the railways, especially during the so-called Railway Mania of 1844–47 when the demand for surveyors far exceeded supply and all sorts of unqualified – or even unscrupulous – people entered the profession.

Charles had no direct involvement with railway work locally and the only reference I have come across to his connection with railway surveying is an advertisement in the *Hampshire Telegraph* in October 1845 for:

A competent land surveyor to undertake a survey of 20 miles of railway line in Oxfordshire (line already laid out) apply Charles Lewis, Havant.

Where he might have been employed however was as a valuer. When a railway company obtained an Act of Parliament giving it permission to construct a line it also acquired powers of compulsory purchase and was, consequently, obliged to pay landowners compensation for any land that it took. So if a local landowner had to negotiate terms with a formidable company like the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway (which extended its line from Chichester to Portsmouth via Havant in 1847 and which often employed the eminent London surveyor, Charles Driver, to do its valuation work then the services of a local surveyor could be invaluable in helping a landowner to obtain a fair price for his land. There is no evidence of Charles doing this in respect of the railways, but he did something very similar regarding the construction of the Palmerston Forts on Portsdown Hill in 1863. In this instance it was the War Office who had the compulsory purchase powers, and when one particular landowner, a Mr Mellersh, disputed the sum he was being offered he called upon Charles as an expert witness when the matter was being decided at Fareham Petty Sessions.

Once his tithe work had been completed in 1843 Charles decided to add an auctioneering business to his surveying work, and he conducted his first auction at North Hayling in February 1814. Again there was a gap in the market because the Havant area had no specialist auctioneer of its own.

Today we tend to think of auctioneering mainly in terms of art and antiques, but from the late 18th Century onwards auctions became an increasingly popular way to dispose of land, buildings and moveable goods, usually of the deceased or bankrupt. In 1788 there were just 14 auctioneers in the whole of Hampshire, but by 1880 that number had risen to 44, and by 1880 there were no less than 100, many of them, like King & King of Portsmouth, very large concerns indeed. This rapid growth meant that most people, like Charles, came into the business from other trades or professions, the most common being cabinet-making and upholstery (presumably because furniture was one of the most common items that auctioneers had to handle).

Auctioneering forms an increasingly important part of Charles's work from the mid 1800s, and although he was never as important as, say, King & King or Frederick Weller of Chichester, he was for forty years by far the leading auctioneer in Havant and the immediate locality. About 80% of the auctions that he conducted were in Havant, Hayling, Warblington, Bedhampton and Waterlooville, although he did hardly any in Emsworth -at least after the mid 1850s when the firm of Laker's was established there. He also did very little over the border in Sussex, where Laker's and the Chichester auctioneers dominated. In fact most of the rest of his work was in places like Blendworth, Rowlands Castle, Catherington, Denmead and Horndean. In 1868 he did open a branch office in Gosport, but it was quite unable to compete with the many local firms and it closed just a few years later after having done almost no business whatsoever.

Moveable goods (mainly furniture, farm livestock and equipment and the stock in trade of bankrupt businesses) accounted for some 60% of the items he auctioned, land and buildings the rest. The properties were mostly residential villas and cottages, the occasional inn, and, in one instance, a windmill (at Denmead). The land was usually small plots, often for building purposes, sometime whole farms, but rarely sizeable estates. When, for example, the Leigh Park estate came up for auction in 1860 and 1875 it was handled by the big London firm of Fairbrother & Lye. The only exceptions were in 1852, when he handled the sale of the 100 acre Blendworth House estate, and in 1863 when he was entrusted with the disposal of the 450 acre Ashton estate in Bishops Waltham. (In 1839 his brother had compiled the Bishops Waltham tithe map, so perhaps the Lewises had some special connection with the

town).

One final field in which he was engaged was as an Enclosure Commissioner. He was responsible for overseeing the enclosure of three small areas on Hayling Island: Stoke Common (1867) North Hayling (1870 and Verner Common (1876), and was also the surveyor for another enclosure at North Hayling in 1840 with Charles Osborn as the Commisioner. It is worth noting however, that he was not appointed to handle the enclosure of the remaining common lands in Havant in 1864. This was done by Richard Pink of Hambledon. However this is probably because by far the largest area to be enclosed was Havant Thicket with its sizeable acreage of woodland, and to assess its value the expertise of a qualified timber surveyor would be required. Pink was such a surveyor; Charles was not. Charles continued working until his death in 1885. True, from 1866 the firm had been known as Lewis & Son, when his son Anthony entered the business at the age of 21, but we know that he continued to be an active partner almost until the end because as late as January 1885 he was the auctioneer appointed by the High Court to sell off a property in East Street, Havant, as part of a legal settlement. And when he did finally pass away, on August 18th the *Hampshire Telegraph* stated that "*although he was slightly indisposed for some little time his death was rather unexpected*".

He died at the house in West Street where he had lived for over forty years and which, since 1866, had been known as Horwood House. It stood on the south-east corner of the junction with Brockhampton Road, but was demolished and replaced by a block of flats called Enderleigh House in the 1960s.

He and his wife Martha (who died in 1872) had, in all, twelve children, no fewer than ten of whom were daughters. Their eldest son, Charles, emigrated to Canada and died of typhoid fever in Luther, Ontario, in 1881, aged just 55. Their second son Anthony, as mentioned above, joined his father's business in 1866 and took it over completely in 1885. He became another well known and popular Havant citizen who involved himself in just about every local activity from the Rifle Volunteers and Ancient Order of Druids to the Cricket and Athletics Clubs. Like his brother, however, he died prematurely, being killed in a shooting accident in the garden of his house in West Street (where Boots is now) in 1893 aged 48.

Although he had married in 1882 his bride had been a 51 year old widow (who pre-deceased him by just over a year) so there were no children, and with his death the firm of Lewis & Son came to an end.

Of the ten daughters only two married, although they all survived beyond middle age. (The only one whose date of death I have been unable to trace is the second

daughter, Mary, but she was certainly recorded on the 1871 census as a 33-year-old spinster living at Horwood House. What becomes of her after this, however, is unclear. Kate, the sixth daughter, married William Colley, a draper from Streatham, and she moved with him to London, while the seventh daughter, Sarah, married Alfred Stent (of the prominent local parchment-making family) and remained in Havant to raise several children. Of these the eldest, Alfred Lewis Stent, is certainly the best known, and there is an article about him in Vol.5 of *The Making of Havant*, 1982.

Four of the unmarried sisters – Martha, Elizabeth, Dora and Laura – became needlewomen who, in around 1875 went into business making and selling what was variously described as "fancy needlework" or "art embroidery" firstly in Portsmouth then (after c.1892) in Lewisham in south-east London. At this stage, however, Laura decided to return to Havant where the other sisters – Fanny, Bertha and Emma – seem to have remained all their lives, existing on private incomes and participating in the affairs of the Congregational Church. At least one of the sisters was always resident at Horwood House and the last surviving one, Laura, finally passed away there in 1932.

Charles and his wife together with Martha, Fanny, Emma and Laura, are buried in the Nonconformist area of New Lane cemetery. This has recently been cleared of vegetation and their graves in the far north-east corner are once more visible, although Charles's headstone remains recumbent, the inscription hidden. A rather unfortunate fate for the resting place of one of Havant's leading citizens in the Victorian era.

Appendix

John Theophilus Lewis, the eldest child of John and Barthias, was, like Charles, born in the Kingston district of Portsmouth, less than three months after his parents' marriage at St Mary's Portsea in June 1795. The earliest reference to him that I can find is in 1822, when his name appears among a long list of subscribers to Nathaniel Lipscombe Kentish's ambitious scheme for:

A map of Hampshire to be made upon an entirely new principle, quite original, upon a larger scale than any map of the same extent ever before published, accompanied by a complete topographical description of the county compiled from the best and latest Authorities.

Advertisement *Hampshire Telegraph* 18 November 1822

Despite the backing of people as eminent as Lord Palmerston, the Duke of Wellington

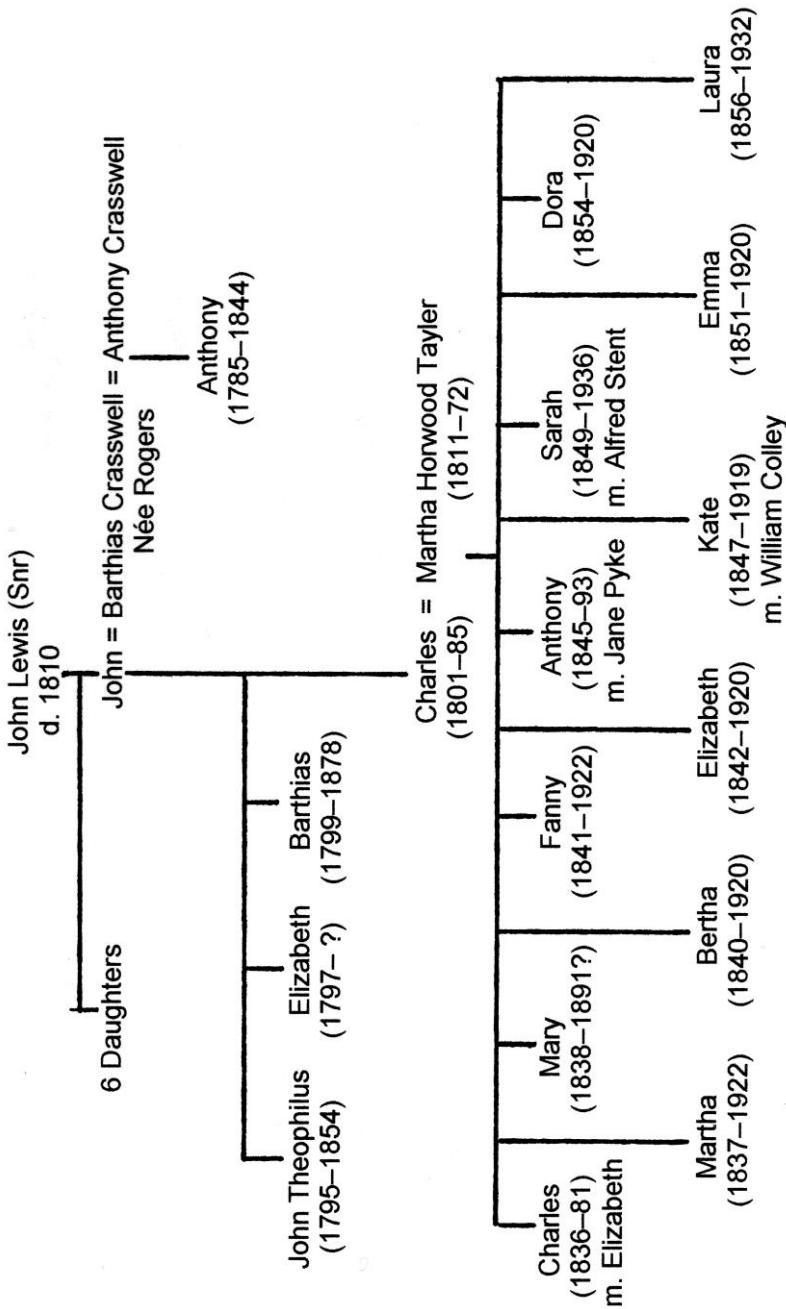
and the Duke of York the project was soon abandoned, but a map of the area around Winchester that Kentish had surveyed was reproduced by lithography and published in 1823. Although the lithographer's name does not appear on the map John must surely have been the man responsible, given that he was the only lithographic printer in the whole of Hampshire at that time.

In 1835 he moved from Winchester, where he had been residing for at least ten years to set up a lithographic printing business in Chichester but he also continued with surveying work. In 1838 he undertook the mapping of the Duke of Bedford's estates in Huntingdonshire and Bedfordshire (he must, presumably, have had some connection with the 6th Duke, who died in 1839 because he had also produced the 5 inches to the mile map of the Woburn area in 1831) while in 1839 he compiled the tithe maps for both Selsey and Bishops Waltham.

In 1840 John Theophilus Lewis moved to Southampton where he went into partnership with one James Walker, his pupil, and the advertisement placed in the *Hampshire Telegraph* announcing this fact informs us that he was the son of another James Walker, a solicitor of East Street, Havant.

Lewis & Walker were responsible for the tithe maps for Upper Clatford and Alverstoke (both 1840) and Shanklin (1842). According to Southampton trade directories for the early 1840s they were also timber surveyors, and there are a few advertisements in the local press for John acting as an estate agent and auctioneer. He also issued, in 1843 a map of Southampton, fully coloured, at a scale of 20 inches to the mile. That same year his wife Elizabeth (née Lucas) died, and by 1845 he had left Southampton. What becomes of him for the next few years I have been unable to discover. (James Walker also vanishes without trace.) On the 1851 census he is recorded at an address in the Bitterne area of Southampton but unfortunately is listed only as a "visitor". However in 1854 his death is recorded in Poplar, in the East End of London. He was only 59, and may well have been a victim of the cholera epidemic that was then sweeping the capital. But why might he have been in Poplar? Intriguingly, his profession on the 1851 census is given not as surveyor or lithographer but civil engineer, and if he was still in that line of business three years later he could well have been engaged in the construction of the nearby Royal Victoria Docks, completed in 1855.

One gets the impression of a multi-talented but restless man who – unlike his brother – could never settle in any one place or pursue any one interest for very long.





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